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Marion Cartwright

An exploration of diverse historical influences on leading and managing continuing  
professional development in colleges  
in the post-incorporated English further education sector

Awarded the degree of PhD

The Open University

2 April 2020

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### **ABSTRACT**

This thesis explores the development of diverse historical influences on the leadership and management of continuing professional development (CPD), within post-incorporated general further education (FE) colleges in England. It has a central focus on the period of the first two decades after 1993 when colleges had left local authority control on incorporation. Underlying the research questions is a consideration of the educational, professional and business orientations of individual leaders, and the extent to which nuanced influences on CPD leadership co-exist, are balanced or in conflict, within the process of leaders mediating, translating and applying sector CPD policy in colleges. The combination of professional life history reflective data used with that of historical public documentary data aims to offer deeper insights into the range and relationship between the influences involved. The effect and differentiation of influences on CPD leadership and management approaches is considered within diverse college internal and external policy contexts of middle and senior managers, and at departmental and cross-college levels. Leaders' and managers' approaches to staff support and development are considered in the light of their own professional experiences, the ongoing changing requirements of external policy and resource boundaries as well as subject, skill and knowledge development and scope for individual staff professional enhancement. The scope of CPD leadership was taken to be as wide as that understood by the leaders and managers. The associated concepts of scope for leadership and management agency, internal organisational and internal and external accountabilities, and effects of staff identities in FE are evaluated. Whilst contributing to knowledge and understanding of this area, there is potential for collaborative sharing of leadership experience of the findings which could lead to more effective sharing of expertise, whilst enhancing organisational staff capacity and staffing strategies. There is potential for further research into leadership of CPD access particularly for the significant body of part-time staff in colleges.

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This thesis investigates the influences of leadership and management on continuing professional development (CPD) in incorporated general further education colleges in England. This is seen from both the perspectives of individuals' own professional experiences, and that from public policy documentation, and the relationship between these views. The introductory chapter outlines the substantive, methodological and theoretical aims and the context of the research reported in this thesis, as it relates to college leadership, management and support for CPD. The underlying research questions arise from the complex relationship between data sets derived from both policy documents and professional life histories. The way in which key terms and concepts are used in this thesis is introduced, and developed further in subsequent chapters in relation to the literature. This includes an evaluation of what is comprised and understood by the terms leadership and management, incorporation, general further education (FE) colleges (GFEC) and their component units and departments and CPD itself. The overall research design is outlined in relation to the research aims, questions and the theoretical implications.

Chapter 1 is organised through the following main sections.

- Research focus, aims and research questions
- The 'FE' sector, incorporation and colleges
- The size, scope and nature of the sector
- The wider political context of incorporation
- Incorporation, college staffing and CPD
- Historical and contextual research complexity
- Methodological issues
- Leaders and/or managers?
- Continuing professional development – terms and scope
- Conceptual and theoretical foci
- Professional development leadership and management: myriad lenses and connections

### **Research focus, aims and research questions**

My research began with an intention to explore the nature and scope of leadership and management of CPD in corporate general FE colleges, following their statutory move from local authority (LA) control to independent corporate legal status from 1993, within what has been described as a ‘complex, amorphous, and ever-changing sector’ (Hodgson et.al., 2015, p.1).

My specific area of interest lies within historical perceptions of ways in which individual leaders approached their leadership and management of CPD to develop expertise, experience and practice of their professional teaching staff. My focus lies in the influence of the historical policy and sector structural changes on colleges and on leaders’ and managers’ professional experience, primarily during periods from 1993 to 2010. Within the professional life-historical accounts of some CPD leaders and managers studied, whose professional life experience extends into the third decade of incorporation, there is reflection on ongoing influences of further sector policy change and restructuring beyond 2010 such as that relating to the pace of college mergers and this is discussed as a reflective postscript in chapter 4, drawing on reflective experience which shaped leaders reflections overall.

Whilst the nature of organisational units in colleges varies from those areas of work involving basic skills to academic, vocational and community provision at various levels and for those from young people to adults, staff backgrounds are also diverse. Whilst units within a college may be variously termed subject, service or programme areas within a college, this term is also used in this thesis to denote activity which is led and managed across the college as a whole. In addition, the sections within units may comprise a wide range of subject and background staff orientations from traditional but declining vocational areas such as engineering and construction to rising service industries as well as development of academic and other educational provision. The research aims to cover such a typical range of areas within GFEC.

My research interest was initially derived from my previous FE management experience, both within and across colleges at middle and senior management levels. This recognised the complexity of management and leadership contextual roles in GFEC, and led to this attempt to uncover implicit and tacit insights into individual and contextually diverse leadership and management approaches, considered in relation to national professional development policy. The impact of the interaction between influences on incorporated colleges is introduced in this chapter and developed in subsequent chapters. My research aims to evaluate potential commonalities as well as differences of perception of individual college leaders and managers. Their different roles, contexts and positions in college structures are expected to vary across cross-college, curricular, disciplinary and subject

responsibilities for the CPD of their staff. However, the aim is to consider potential transferability to similar contexts; to share and enhance opportunities for leaders to respond to the range of CPD needs.

The substantive, methodological and theoretical aims were developed from this overall focus.

- My substantive aim is to identify CPD individual leadership and management understandings, in relation to individual professional life histories and experience. Within this lies the question of the complex relationship with, and effects of, the expectations and assumptions revealed by the historical policy documentation in this area.
- My methodological aim involves an approach to seeking historical insights into CPD influences and foci within public historical policy documentary evidence. Alongside this, individual constructions, reflections and descriptive situated insights, are sought from leaders' and managers' professional life-history narratives. Using the narrative form of both public and individual narratives the relationship between FE CPD policy and college practice is sought in the responses to the challenge of myriad influences.
- The theoretical aim involves consideration of leadership and management from a college organisational view in terms of policy accountability and from that of the leaders' self-agency. The influences of different forms of accountability - whether of personal, political, pedagogic, disciplinary or of earlier occupational origin – is expected to influence their CPD leadership and management strategy and practice alongside their own identities and values.

Although the focus includes the role of formalised organisationally-led approaches to leading CPD within colleges, the research is concerned also with informal approaches to supporting leading and managing CPD, which is of particular relevance to the ability of part-time staff to access opportunities after incorporation (Jameson and Hillier, 2008).

The key overall research questions within the potential range of influences were iteratively developed during the research process in terms of the following foci.

- What did leaders and managers in FE colleges perceive CPD to comprise?
- What is the relationship between these leaders' and managers' individual experiential professional influences and those arising from professional educational and corporate business policy?
- What sense of individual agency and accountability is involved in the leadership and management of CPD in their diverse professional contexts?

### **The FE sector, incorporation and colleges**

The issues of incorporation and sector change for colleges form an underlying key contextual frame to the thesis. The scope and consequences for colleges are wide-ranging and complex and CPD leadership and management needs to be understood within this context. What comprises and is recognised as the FE and learning and skills sector changed structurally particularly during the corporate college historical period of 1993-2010.

The complex sector of which colleges are a part, is characterised by the wide range of provision offered by general colleges and associated types of staff experience and background to be responded to by leaders in supporting and developing their staff. FE had been defined by Kennedy (1997) as that which is neither higher education nor compulsory educational provision in the UK, but Kennedy goes on to recognise the overlap between provision across schools, higher education and other community providers. Foster (2005) saw FE as the 'middle child' between other sectors of education but Avis (2009) regards this position as both confusing and ambivalent. For researchers it suggests an unsatisfactory explanation of the purpose and nature of such a diverse sector. Its contextual diversity is of particular relevance both in terms of evaluating the effect of different contexts and the range of literature, developed in chapter 2 in relation to CPD, but also in relation to FE sector historical documented policy which is evaluated in chapter 4. The contextual range, both across the sector and within colleges directly relates to the process of understanding the nature and scope of leadership and management in FE (Schedlitzki and Edwards, 2014), and this informs my research design and methodology.

The nature and categorisation of FE, as between school compulsory education and university level higher education, hides the plethora of overlapping provision, qualification levels, subject, disciplinary focus for learners and the variety of staff background and professional identities involved in incorporated colleges. In addition, the sector as a whole has been known by different titles and has had different sources of funding and organisation of core purposes, at different historical points over incorporation. Whilst the sector by 2001 encompassed elements of compulsory education provision as well as adult and community

provision that was outside colleges, and some higher education courses, colleges operated primarily within their FE corporate status and national funding structures. The scale of college amalgamations over three decades increased pace and resulted in greater structural complexity for some colleges. For example, the organisation and funding of some provision and its staffing, such as adult and vocational education - shared across public, corporate, employer, private, local authority and community structures - added to college and CPD complexity, especially for part-time staff, many of whom were contracted via private employment agencies. Structural diversity within GFEC informed my research design and sample to cover a range of leaders' contexts, as discussed in chapter 3, in order to make sense of the plurality of the context in which each leader and manager practiced CPD leadership.

These public sector FE colleges are diverse but they represent 'a hybrid between [the] public and private sector' (Lumby and Simkins, 2002, p.6) and serve a variety of different purposes. GFEC after 1992 reflect corporate business structures and values on the one hand, but with commercial business limitations, and on the other persistent historic public service values and expectations. The issues posed for investigation include those of the influences of these values on CPD leadership, and the extent, balance and prioritization of values as evidenced through individual historical reflections and policy discourses within documentary sources.

### **The size, scope and nature of the sector**

The diversity of the FE sector is widely recognised and whilst its flexibility of response and adaptability to change is acknowledged, its fragmentary development and structure across different colleges nationally has been conceptualised as marginal in terms of the wider educational system in England (Bailey and Unwin, 2014; Gray and Griffin, 2000; Green and Lucas, 1999). However, defining its overall size, scope and nature and characterising its staffing and associated issues over a period of ongoing change involves a complex and shifting analysis over the decades of incorporation.

#### ***Size***

The size of the sector can be determined by the numbers of colleges, student learners, college income, by staff numbers and the range of their experience as well as by the nature of staff contracts. All of these factors are relevant in considering the nature, scope and scale of the colleges and their identity and change over the decades of incorporation. The overall size, scope and scale of the sector is indicated by Hodgson et al. (2015) who cite over 1000 different FE education and skills providers in England by 2014 amongst which public funding is shared, although the share of general FE colleges is the most significant. The total number of colleges in England and the numbers of GFEC has to be seen historically

within the categorisation, movement and re-designation by type of college over the period being considered. At incorporation 1992-1993, the Further and Higher Education Act (1992) identified 427 colleges, of which 291 were GFEC but only 5 of these claimed Tertiary provision in their title despite other colleges including some tertiary provision. Movements by 1998 identified 435 colleges, 217 of which were categorised by the funding council as GFEC, 63 as tertiary and 107 as 6<sup>th</sup> form colleges; the remainder being specialist colleges. In addition, 235 local authorities were funded as external institutions (Melville and Macleod, 2000). By 2014-15 Hodgson, Bailey and Lucas (2015) based on government statistics listed 328 colleges of which 235 were GFEC and Tertiary. Later in 2014-15 the Association of Colleges (AoC, 2019a) were listing 335 colleges of which 216 were defined as GFEC (AoC, 2016) but by 2017-2018, whilst their workforce survey estimated 251 colleges in total, only 171 of these were listed as GFEC (AoC, 2019c). By the time of publication of the 2018-2019 statistics 257 colleges in total had 174 of them as GFEC (AoC, 2019a). The Hodgson and Spours (2019) reference broadly reinforce this in citing a total of 266 colleges, of which 179 were GFEC. However, there was rapid movement during these periods across categories which not only involved ongoing mergers in train but re-designations between Academy school status, 6<sup>th</sup> form colleges, tertiary colleges, general FE colleges and further and higher education colleges and those with University College status as well as land-based college status changes. This explains the growth and decline within a particular category. In addition, many figures cited represent partial returns and estimated totals. Nevertheless, although fluctuating, by 2019 total numbers of colleges overall had dropped and show a changing picture of fewer and mostly larger colleges over the period.

College mergers, the policy documentation for which is discussed further in chapter 4, increasingly created larger, multi-site group colleges with mixed provision, operating as one organisation. This overall reduction was largely as a result of the increasing pace of mergers and take-overs which were encouraged by efficiency savings in a tight resource context. Whilst this could affect the overall institutional identity of these colleges, staffing restructuring and redundancies, (Spours et al., 2019; FETL, 2019 and Jupp 2015) regarded mergers into groups of colleges as offering scope for specific brands and associated cultures to be maintained. Although there had been waves of mergers up to 2015, 2017 saw a very sharp rise in mergers. Over 2016-2019, a period including post-16 Area Reviews and issues of college financial sustainability, there were 64 mergers. Whilst this reduced some duplication of provision it also opened more opportunities for collaboration between institutions (AoC, 2019b), including those with higher education and neighbouring FE colleges.

Although the national Area-Based Review (ABR) process for 16-18-year-old provision finished by 2017, and followed the effects of austerity and competition for FE colleges, the

reviews have only been partially implemented so far and leave colleges without a clear long-term future and with what Keep considers to be ‘cooperation superimposed upon and subordinated to a marketplace’ (Keep in FETL, 2019, p.299). The situation of the ABRs omitting consideration of school 6th forms, some of which converted to 16-19 Academies, or of some Colleges acting as academic sponsors, resulted in a partial review process. Spours et al. (2018) in a study of London ABRs argued that they were a result of the failure of the market model in terms of efficiency and effectiveness and a transition towards public collaboration. The number of college take-overs suggested primarily issues of viability were involved but there were different internal interests and identities in some new large merged institutions. The ABR process re-shaped the sector and reduced some duplication (AoC, 2019b) but the effects of merger on staff CPD have yet to be fully researched.

Within the FE incorporated sector many colleges combined by merger into groups of colleges. Nationally orientated college groupings by type developed with particular foci and interests, often with an intent to represent colleges with similar characteristics in policy areas. For example, the Association of Colleges (AoC), with a 95% sector membership presents itself as a national voice for FE, sixth-form colleges, tertiary and specialist colleges, with a brief to influence policy and advise colleges on issues from those of contractual employment to wider policy. Other national groupings emerged such as the 157 Group, formed in 2006, and re-launched in 2016, as Collabgroup (Collabgroup, 2019). Their membership exists primarily of a group of large colleges, often with a regional reach and a mixed FE/HE economy with a mission to collaborate and work in partnership with employers. Tertiary colleges have also operated as a group in representations to government. In many cases colleges hold multiple memberships of these sector groupings which each have a particular focus. Although my own focus lay within the historical earlier decades of incorporation, recent literature, such as that by Keep in FETL (2018); Hodgson et al., (2015); Coffield et al., (2008) and O’Leary et al., (2019), project the way forward for FE as one which should privilege collaboration as opposed to competition. Whilst this is not a new agenda, as Smithers and Robinson (2000) and Gravatt and Silver (2000) remind us in relation to franchising, the structure of FE of often larger amalgamated colleges within the wider Learning and Skills sector suggested that the time was ripe for change. There may be scope for greater collaboration, public social partnership and sharing of professional learning (Hodgson and Spours, 2015), especially when Silver (in FETL, 2019) felt there was little clarity or vision as to the future shape of FE. The suggestion of Hodgson and Spours (2015) is of a move of FE staff from dual professionalism (of vocational occupation and teaching) to an idea of ‘triple professionalism’. This could involve greater involvement and collaboration with others in the wider sector and would involve participation in partnership activity outside the college. For CPD leadership this could include sharing of professional experience across the sector. With the number of colleges in decline, increasing specialisation and some adult education budgets being devolved outside colleges,



Keep argues that there may be greater opportunities for collaboration and partnerships (Keep, 2019).

To move on from sector size to that of colleges it is clear that student numbers varied over the decades of incorporation. Rospigliosi (2000, p.152) noted the policy aim behind the Further and Higher Education Act (FHE Act 1992) had been one of 'rapid growth in student enrolments from 2,391,000 to 2,462,000' between 1992 and 1994. By the end of the first decade there were colleges with 'fewer than 500 students and the largest of over 20,000', with 3 million students in total with a majority of adult students (Ainley and Bailey, 1997, p.1). The statistics for 'student units' of learning, using the Further Education Funding Councils' (FEFC) funding methodology complicated the calculation in that individual students would be counted for each unit for funding purposes. Following a demand-led funding element, Green and Lucas (1999) observed that the widening participation agenda was further recognised in the funding formula by the FEFC following the Kennedy Report of 1997 (Kennedy, 1997). Melville and Macleod (2000) estimated that the FEFC data represented growth of approximately 6% in full-time students but a 42% rise in total part-time learners. Using the wider definition of the education and skills providers by 2014, total student numbers were estimated at 4.2 million by Hodgson et al. (2015) and at 3 million annually by O'Leary by 2019 (O'Leary et al., 2019).

One way in which individual colleges may be classified by size is by a college level of public funding, which represented the majority of income for most colleges. This criterion is one of those used in this research to determine a reasonable typical range of differently sized colleges within which leaders and managers were researched (see sample characteristics discussed in Chapter 3 and Appendices 5 and 6). In 1993 figures were published in the form of annual recurrent funding figures (FEFC, 1993). In broad terms the % of public funding reflected the size and scope of the course provision of a general college of FE and its staffing. However, there were significant detailed historical and projected student target variations within such a diverse sector which were indicated in college corporate strategic plans. This approach to sampling could only be taken initially by determination of college income at the point of incorporation, and as discussed in chapter 3, was modified by subsequent documentation relating to the college.

College size also may be evaluated in terms of the staffing levels required for teaching and learning the extent of courses offered by an individual college. Overall staffing levels in individual colleges over the incorporated period were indicated in College Strategic Plans to the FEFC from 1993, then in the Staff Individualised Record (SIR) annual returns, via a series of other staff surveys and in College Inspection Reports. However, the transfer of records from local authority employment to college corporate employment, the partial nature of the returns, the different methodologies used, and the suggestions based on incomplete evidence of college staffing lead to a significant level of estimation.

Whilst Elliott and Hall (1994) suggested a level of 20% of part-time staff at incorporation, the Government Select Committee of 1998 acknowledged growth but was not able to quantify it. Based on the FEFC staff record Fletcher et al. (2015) estimated a level of 60% of part-time staff by 2013. They also noted that for totals for all lecturing staff in colleges national statistics were not available in 1993 but were estimated at approximate 70,000, rising by 50% by the next decade. The scale of the total recurrent funding by 2014 for 16-19-year-olds in all FE colleges from the government Department for Education in England was £3.78 billion., with £2 billion allocated by the Skills Funding Agency for 19+ (Hodgson, 2015). Total college spend is cited in 2018/2019 figures as £6.5 billion., of which staff costs were indicated to be £4.4 billion. (AoC, 2019a).

Lucas (2000) suggests the effects of incorporation in reducing permanent posts but increasing students created this large increase in part-time teaching contracts. The use of part-time staff contracts was believed to be widespread but the scale of it is variously estimated, especially where agency staff were used during this period. Whilst it is difficult to quantify its growth, owing to its often transient and variable contractual nature, definition and partial data, a workforce analysis survey based on the Staff Individualised Record and Lifelong Learning UK figures, (but only a more than 30% survey college response rate), supports the 60% estimate of part-time staff contracts (ETF, 2016).

The factors for incorporated colleges discussed in this section suggests policy difficulties nationally and locally for leaders and managers in planning as well as in implementing policy and ensuring CPD access particularly for part-time staff. Nationally policy in a sector with high staff turnover levels plus the use of estimated backfilled data in statistics, where colleges did not provide data returns, limited scope for a national plan (LLUK, 2011). The scale and the scope of colleges for estimation of staffing size within the sector compounded difficulties. The 2019 sector estimate for all colleges was of 116,000 staff (but in the form of full-time *equivalent* staffing) of which 57000 were classified as teaching staff (AoC, 2019a). The 2017/2018 AoC Workforce Survey (from a 50% College response) estimated total employment of 182,000 people but this only included some part-time staff and included non-teaching staff (AoC, 2019c).

### ***Scope and nature***

It has been argued that the nature of the sectors' lack of clear distinct focus and purpose has affected both its status and funding (Foster, 2005; Coffield et.al, 2008). Whilst historically the sector has retained wide ranging functions, many of which are shared with other education and training providers, colleges' specific focus on vocational technical, youth and adult education has been driven by public funding incentives and thus pragmatic competitive market and resource pressures. The effect of voluntarism alongside market policy focus has limited national systematic development of the sector and created FE as

the adaptive educational layer between schools and universities with open boundaries (Bailey and Unwin, 2014; Gravatt and Silver, 2000; Pratt, 2000).

The history of FE has been demonstrated to have offered a diverse range of college provision from that of technical vocational education to academic courses and adult and community 'leisure learning' provision and some higher education courses. Although there has been some continuity of historical provision in terms of range, the nature of the voluntarism of further and adult education, alongside a greater focus on markets and competitiveness between colleges after incorporation, changed the balance of courses offered (Bailey and Unwin, 2014; Simmonds, 2008; Smithers and Robinson, 2000). The public funding of the vocational courses in colleges, listed under Schedule 2 of the FHE Act, narrowed the college focus on non-certificated adult education leisure learning primarily to either full-cost or local authority provision and that provided by independent organisations (FHE Act, 1992). However, provision in general colleges of FE over the incorporated period moved its main focus of traditional industrial provision to other funded areas. For 2003-2004 the largest areas of provision lay in performance arts, media, language and communication, health, social care and services and foundation programmes. These subject areas were similar by 2009-2010 but business and professional areas also rose and were funded to become some of the largest areas (LLUK, 2005; LLUK, 2011). Perry and Davies (2015, p.53) observed that by 2011-2012 under a category defining learners in the 'Preparation for Life and Work' area, the numbers vastly outstripped all others, with service industries the next largest categories. The level of qualification offered had previously been broadly within the area of sub-degree work although not exclusively. The permeable boundaries of FE had included work with the under-16 age group as well as that of higher education and foundation degree courses from 2001 which were validated via universities. The latter, which was a significant feature whilst supported by central funding was fundamentally neither an employer nor student-led development and illustrates the nature of the quasi-market within which FE operates. In terms of staff diversity, the range of FE provision reflects colleges' staff profiles and professional experience which were equally diverse.

In terms of professional development in the context of the sector scope and nature, external courses and briefings had been run primarily for senior staff from colleges in England and Wales by The FE Staff College (FESC), at Coombe Lodge, Bristol and the work of the national Further Education Unit (FEU) included professional development for college staff to adapt to change within their roles. These publicly funded bodies were amalgamated in 1995 and subsequently replaced by the Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA) and other bodies took over some professional development offerings at a national level as part of their brief. For example, these included Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK), Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS), the Education and Training Foundation (ETF) and

work via the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). The latter facilitated an ‘feconnect’ forum and offered a scheme in 2014 with a focus on basic skills provision (ESFA, 2019). However ESFA had a wider funding brief and this, and the effect of professional development funding having been incorporated into college budgets, led to a greater focus on college business priorities at the expense of support for wider staff development.

### **The wider political context of incorporation**

It is clear from the ongoing changing context of incorporation for colleges that the shape of FE was affected by the wider political context of education and training policy during the period and its consequences for leaders and managers and for CPD approaches. The environment in which corporate colleges operate is influenced by political goals, social and educational values, economic and employment market factors and community considerations. For colleges this involves a balance and interaction between business and commercial pressures and social outcomes at different points in the history of incorporation (Keep, 2018).

As developed in more detail in chapter 4, the political impetus of the move of FE colleges from local authority (LA) control to that of independent corporations was part of a wider political agenda by the Conservative governments of the time. The policy intent aimed to reduce control by LAs, and aimed to tackle ‘value for money’ efficiencies identified by the Audit Commission in 1985 (Holloway, 1999). Public funding control involved central formulae and colleges being controlled via accountability mechanisms. Incorporation in 1993 however, was not a clean break for FE, since market responsiveness particularly in relation to vocational provision, had been encouraged by a range of Conservative funded government initiatives from the 1980s. (FEU, 1985; Theodossin, 1986). However, LAs were seen by Government as bureaucratic and resistant to change.

### ***New Public Management***

Incorporation is associated with the concept of new public management (NPM) and its relationship to managerialism in the 1980s in the UK and elsewhere. It has been presented as a critique of state regulation, a focus on performance management, efficiency and value-for money gains along with audit and competitive strategies. Associated with planning technologies and the manipulation of data, NPM has been conceptualised as the state representing a cumbersome and inefficient service provider (Knafo, 2019). However, Avis et al. (1996) in the context of post-compulsory education, although recognising policy as instrumentalist, critiques different versions of the political New Right over the period which go beyond markets and efficiency to encompass the role of education in society, social justice and to include personal development.

Avis et al. (1996) recognised NPM as part of a government economic modernisation agenda aiming to reverse economic decline, increase competitiveness, and to tackle education and labour in relation to demand and supply of services. However, the traditional foci of post-compulsory education of individual development and staff professional autonomy sat uneasily alongside marketization and accountable managerialism. Steer et al. (2007) suggest that modernisation was linked, but separate from, NPM to focus on social/democratic policy, but was presented as rational public management business improvement. Coupland et al. (2008) suggested that the stake-holding element of NPM and modernisation agendas was presented as a transformational, visionary leadership approach but in practice involved the use of system management. So, there is a potential tension raised by Avis who suggested that ‘crasser forms’ of NPM were criticised by New Labour for excessive target driven micro-management of performance, which was counter-productive and limiting for professional agency, creative freedom and innovation (Avis, 2009, p.636). These were potential tensions and balances to be determined in practice by leaders and managers.

Fletcher et al. (2015, p.171) suggest that ‘ideas around NPM have emphasised the desirability of separating the providers from those who purchase or commission them’, thus creating a market demand rather than supply-led situation, despite government funding priorities and central policy steers (Hodgson and Spours, 2015). Allied to this are the complicating issues of lowering unit costs, widening participation, inclusiveness and developing skills to promote economic growth.

Lucas and Crowther (2016) represent neo-liberalism as involving privatised individualism as a public good, reducing costs and creating quasi-markets after incorporation. For FE colleges it was seen as creating a management culture alongside regulation and policy levers which operated in a period of austerity and for Smith and O’Leary (2013) NPM as involving a form of managerialist positivism.

Neo-liberalism and NPM give rise to at least policy tensions if not contradictions for post-compulsory education. Coffield et al. (2008) and Knafo (2019) raise the issue of the balance between competing agendas since NPM can be seen as an adaptation and hybrid in relation to public services, which in turn is mediated by college leaders and managers. The fit between college autonomy, public choice, managerial empowerment and entrepreneurialism with state control, along with regulation on grounds of efficiency create uncomfortable bedfellows. Within the educational quasi-market context, performance management is a significant factor yet accountability involving data generation, for example in relation to funding requirements, requires the very bureaucracy criticised pre-incorporation (Knafo, 2019). For the leaders and managers in this research their own values and experience is linked to these factors and mediated and balanced, in different ways, between them. Whilst Ball (1995) highlights the instrumental technical procedures for

leaders' and managers' implementation of quality and accountability policy, he also identifies the complexity of social factors of belief and experience which go beyond their contextual circumstances. The performability and appraisal issues involved in a quasi-market and a managerialist target-driven context suggest a dualism between professional judgement and culture and that of monitoring and surveillance (Ball, 1998; 2003). These influences comprise the environment in which FE leaders and managers operate and is explored further in the section on leaders and/or managers in this chapter and managerialism in Chapter 2.

### **Incorporation, college staffing and CPD**

The interaction of factors involved in both leadership and management of CPD is complex and likely to involve careful mediation and translation of policy within colleges. Coffield et al., (2008, p.106) recognise that staff and professional development is 'a very complex and sensitive issue'. Stakeholders in CPD range from individual college teaching staff and their learners, middle and senior managers and their institution, funders and workforce development policy makers and both local and national partners.

The Further and Higher Education Act, (FHE Act, 1992) gave colleges the power and responsibility for managing their finances and premises, to contract staff directly and to determine conditions of service following the transfer of existing contracts (Simmons, 2008; FHE Act, 1992). However, as noted by Withers (1998, p.40) incorporation in this wide-ranging sector and its colleges was 'a multi-layered innovation, initiated centrally but interpreted in many different institutions over a period of time'. Shain and Gleeson (1999, p.445) observed that whilst corporate managerial discourses 'emphasised flexibility, reliability and competence', elements of public sector traditional educational professional values remained. This complexity, of both ongoing policy change and of mixed college values, led in this thesis to the need to consider the historical and different college contextual dimensions of individual leaders and managers, alongside the extent of their own professional experiences, values and judgements of agentic prioritization.

The direct relevance of incorporation for CPD leadership historically lay partly in the consequence of its funding becoming a college responsibility rather than being supported by central funding and organised via LAs. A survey of 124 colleges after incorporation suggested college spend on workforce development budgets to be only in a range 0-3.8% of income with 71% of colleges allocating less than 0.5%, suggesting limited resource support for CPD (AoC, 2019c). For the colleges, CPD included formal training needed to cover corporate business and market skill needs. Individual and team educational and professional development provision was not specifically required to be reported by colleges to the FEFC in early incorporation strategic planning (FEFC, 1992/18), although national

updating funds had been incorporated into college budgets but not ring-fenced. Lucas (2000) and others drew attention to the effect of incorporation on CPD being impacted by the loss of some national ring-fenced funding. Thus, responsibility for funding CPD and its prioritisation had fallen onto colleges directly. Many colleges were stretched financially by new corporate responsibilities, and the move to convergence towards an average level of college funding across the sector (Ainley and Bailey, 1997).

The national CPD policy context was one of a very low profile and neither the Government inspectorate nor the funding council engaged with it until the end of the first decade (Fletcher et al., 2015; FEFC, 1999). The colleges had a greater concern with issues of organisational survival, financial and cashflow forecasts (FEFC 1992a). Since histories, cultures and expectations of CPD ranged across those arising from staff working within college adult education, vocational, professional, training or academic contexts, as well as across different specific disciplines, there were substantial variations in teaching staff professional backgrounds and CPD expectations to respond to. CPD policy was overlaid by concepts of skills and wider educational, as well as corporate business, issues such as levels of participation, retention and learning outcomes. Lucas (2000, p.233) recognised that FE comprised ‘a spectrum of fragmented and largely isolated traditions of pedagogy’ which complicated CPD. Its nature and the scope for college leaders’ and managers’ agency, spans not only this diverse historical range but also involved both informal and formal means of delivering support.

Whilst some early studies recognised limitations to corporate independence, given a high level of dependence on, and thus accountability for, public funding, there is little early specific reference to the effect of incorporation on CPD. During different periods of incorporation, FE literature has focused on policy and contractual changes, and their consequences for associated student and staff implications for business, management and accountability. The historical influences after incorporation on FE professionals, based on the corporate quasi-business orientation of the sector’s new legal status from 1993, have been researched from a policy orientation. This has involved dominant factors such as accountable funding targets and issues of college corporate strategy, with less focus on issues of CPD until the period of its compulsory recording from 2007 until 2012 (Lucas, 2013; Simmons, 2008; Ainley and Bailey, 1997).

The education, training and development of staff, although not the detail of individual leadership activity in this area, gained prominence in the literature when it raised its profile via its association with policy relating to performance, teaching standards, quality and the wide-ranging debates around contested notions of what constituted professionalism in FE. (Orr, 2009; Lucas, 2004). Such literature offered perspectives on the range of influences which affected professional development but most focused on the college-wide impact, rather than that offered through the lens of individual middle leaders’ particular contexts

within GFE colleges, (for example, Crowley (2014), Iszatt-White et al. (2011), Lumby and Tomlinson (2000) and Withers, (1998, 1999), whose contexts were mainly those of senior managers.

Earlier studies were primarily concerned with middle managers' perceptions and that of lecturers' views of incorporation more generally (Shain and Gleeson, 1999; Randle and Brady, 1997). Studies which offered leadership and management role perceptions, particularly those differentiated by their specific departmental unit context within GFE colleges have been less well developed, although there are examples of a focus on sixth-form provision both within and outside general FE colleges (Stoten, 2011a; Briggs, 2005).

As Gleeson and James (2007, p.459) observed of FE's history of structural instability, there are 'ambiguities and tensions, [and] disruptions of historical [change] and contradictions of lived professional experiences [which] create a multiplicity of identities and responses to external pressures'. These complex relationships and a sense of the balance and/or tension between influences on individual leaders and managers have to be set in this thesis within different internal FE college contexts.

These considerations discussed in relation to incorporation were taken into account in determining an appropriate contextual sample of leaders and managers for this research and offer some background and interpretation of the terms used in the methodology chapter 3 and its associated Appendices 4 and 5. The influences of factors and circumstances of incorporation are investigated and reported in Chapters 5 and 6 in relation to the perceptions of senior and middle leaders and managers.

### *Conditions of service*

The scope of FE staffing and its implications for CPD need to be seen within the context of conditions of service for lecturers, especially in the light of contractual changes and disputes of the 1990s. Soon after lecturers in FE were employed directly by corporate colleges, the process and consequences of negotiating new contracts of employment and conditions of service, became a focus of the literature, and this was significantly influenced by funding restrictions and staffing capacity. Robson (1996), who focused on the implications for professional development, suggests incorporation moved to a human resource (HR) management business focus as an alternative to leading professional development in its wider and less formal sense. Yet Jupp (2015) in his reflections as a principal felt that there was little knowledge or support with this new corporate function compared to that involving new funding structures.

Researchers of the disputes and management of new staff contracts were concerned with the revision of conditions of service and a move from the pre-incorporation 'Silver Book' contracts. Much of this research was seen in the literature largely from the teacher perspective and that of the Conservative government's policy intent of reducing trade union



and local authority influence, and creating resource efficiencies (Fletcher et al., 2015; Ainley and Bailey, 1997; Betts, 1996).

Following what Ainley and Bailey (1997, p.24) consider to have been ‘quite advantageous’ terms of employment within the 1973 ‘Silver Book’ LA and union national agreement, incorporation led to employers’ associations to represent the majority of colleges in new contract pay negotiations. These associations, such as the Colleges Employers Forum (CEF) which eventually merged into the Association for Colleges (AoC), strongly supported policy to deliver new contracts and to avoid financial deficits and redundancies. The FEFC further encouraged new contracts, which generally increased staff workloads and decreased time for professional development, by indicating their intention to withhold funding if progress with new contracts had not been made (FEFC, 1994). Betts (1996) drew attention to the framework agreed by the National Joint Council for FE in 1991 which required staff to participate in a local scheme for staff appraisal but notes the 1992 FE Act removed the LEA from this agreement on college incorporation. The National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education (NATFHE) went into dispute with the Colleges’ Employers Forum, who supported college employers’ changes to the ‘Silver Book’ based contract, on financial efficiency and flexible employment ‘modernizing’ grounds (Bailey and Ainley, 1997, p.40). However, Elliott (2000) recognises the opportunity of contract renegotiation for some college managers who embraced market competitiveness and had been frustrated by inflexible conditions within the ‘Silver Book’ contracts.

### ***Performativity, standards and professional development***

Apart from that relating to contractual disputes, literature on CPD policy within colleges in early incorporation is limited but there was a focus on performativity and formalised and institutional college outcomes (Avis, 2002; FEFC, 1999). Research based directly on the perceptions of leaders of their leadership of CPD in FE, was less prominent although there was more on the development of the leaders’ *own* professional development (Lumby, 2005). This thesis aims to contribute to the area of scope for CPD leadership and management within differential contexts in general FE colleges.

CPD is considered more broadly than that of initial pedagogically focused training, although some of that is delivered in-service. In a review of the effect of the 2007 Regulations requiring compulsory progress towards such qualification for new entrants, a study based on 27 colleges estimated that 68-80% of new entrants met this target and despite limited funding support there were some signs of increasing participation in CPD (DBIS, 2012). Although this evidence is limited, it is suggested that prioritisation of the latter focused on subject knowledge. However, increasing focus and regulation of CPD became evident via developing national standards, such as those of the Further Education National Training Organisation (FENTO), and particularly the statutory requirement from 2007 to 2012 for FE teachers to undertake and record compulsory CPD (Crowther, 2014; Lucas, 2004).

Informal means of development, from networking to shared practice had to run alongside the more formalised forms of CPD. The theme of informal CPD is developed in FE business orientated studies such as that of Iszatt-White et al. (2011), who argued that it is as important to individuals as for corporate continuing learning. A series of studies such as that by Stoll (2013), on leading professional learning communities, and Broad (2015; 2016), including tacit un-codified knowledge, acknowledge the role of informal means via networking and sharing of practice. However, the challenge for leaders supporting access to informal means of CPD, particularly for part-time staff affected by casualisation after incorporation, is reinforced by Husband (2018). This study, along with Lucas and Unwin (2009), discussed more fully in chapter 2, had a concern with ongoing CPD from the stage of initial pedagogic training and offered insights into both scope and limitations of support for CPD in colleges, involving funding, workloads and access to opportunities as key factors to consider. However, overall, in relation to leaders and CPD, (rather than that from the trainee staff lecturers' view), the evidence is limited and the need for further detailed research in this area has been recognised.

Husband (2018) in considering the longer-term effects of programmes of initial teacher education on lecturers' CPD was concerned with access to ongoing CPD experiences, of both a formal and informal nature. Within a turbulent sector, he found that knowledge gaps, together with solutions to problems, were a significant priority for CPD for leaders to engage with. In my research design, the consideration of these priorities from both middle and senior leadership perspectives, and from those with cross-college and departmental unit responsibilities, offered an opportunity for further individual insights and perceptions of their relative CPD importance.

### **Historical and contextual research complexity**

These disparate influences highlighted in the literature and the policy documentation suggest a potential context of considerable complexity compounded by the mix of professional histories, values and understandings of the sector by the staff and leadership within a college. The significant scope for both business and educational approaches within general FE colleges, influencing college leadership and management, involves evaluating the influence of the associated issues of funding, legal status and responsibilities, different and variable staff roles, identities, values and perceptions of accountabilities. Partly due to sector and college diversity the pace, complexity and spread of change during incorporation historically, creates a need to trace its effect not only over the different policy periods but also through the different contexts within a college.

For this research the process of the investigation of leadership and management within colleges is intended to highlight the range of ways in which CPD is perceived, interpreted

and integrated. This involves individual professional experience of these leaders and managers, their own values and sense of identity. Whilst they lead their teams within the implications and assumptions arising from the national policy context, my methodology aims to offer insights from within individual professional leadership sources, as the two are intertwined.

### **Methodological issues**

The methodology for this thesis is developed from the epistemological position, discussed further in chapter 3, which is concerned with exploration and interpretative constructed approaches to the interaction, between a complex range of CPD understandings of individual professional life history reflections and public documentary evidence. In designing the research my intent was to study a variety of evidence, including public historical political texts and leaders' individual reflections in an attempt to relate 'macro' and 'micro' insights into CPD leadership dimensions (Clough, 2004), within the diverse curriculum, learner and staff contexts of colleges. The effects of a potential range of professional identities, values and accountabilities influenced my research design to consider the different voices involved.

### ***Integration of individual and policy perspectives on leading and managing CPD***

My approach to this research involves application of methodologies commonly applied to documentary analysis by those working within a historical discipline (Rury, 2006). Although the life history interview approaches can be associated with oral history, they are used here within the broader discipline of educational approaches, and those within educational leadership and management, the latter in turn derived from business and management theory. In this sense I am using an interdisciplinary approach to support my investigation which draws on a range of disciplinary methodologies. As McCulloch (2004, p.8) notes there needs to be a 'relationship between biography, history and social structures.' He regards the failure to take account of life histories of individuals, alongside the analyses of documentary history, to be a 'methodological defect' in constructing 'a notion of a social reality', as these offer in combination greater insights via a form of methodological pluralism (McCulloch, 2004, p.14).

### ***Professional life histories***

To uncover the scope of the potential range of perceptions and constructions of CPD from volunteer leaders within FE professional peer networks, understandings of corporate FE were initially sought informally to act as prompts and search terms. Volunteer participants for life-history development interviews were then sought of leaders from general FE colleges whose roles involved leading CPD in their units, whether of a formal or informal nature. The range of these leaders included those whose role involved departmental or

subject orientated teams, and those with cross-college roles, and needed to cover between them the historical range of professional CPD experience across the incorporated period in colleges. More detailed professional life history reflective sessions involved contextual explanatory comment (See Appendix 3).

As an exploratory study of leaders' and managers' professional development the thesis is concerned with leaders' own constructions of their perceptions, seen in relation to historical documentary policy contexts. Using professional narrative approaches with leaders, talking in their own reflective voice, in the context of their own professional experience and underlying values, the narrative conversations were intended to be largely unstructured.

#### *Historical documentary approaches*

Evaluation and analysis of public documentary sources was informed by educational historical documentary methodologies; life-history reflections by professional, individual and personal approaches. The underlying evaluation is thus of the relationship between personal leadership values and the corresponding national policy narrative influencing what CPD was expected to achieve by the targets associated with policies.

Use was made of documentary historical data as source material rather than as background descriptive context and aimed to identify some of the historical assumptions, which can be compared to individual reflections of leaders. The limitations of static historical documentary evidence are recognised as partial evidence in that it represents only the evidence that was both recorded and survived (McCulloch, 2004). However, similarly there is individual variation involved in memory recall of historical events and professional practice of leaders in their life history reflections. Whilst this makes for selective memories, it does provide some shape and meaning to the individual (Plummer, 2007). Whilst there is scope to integrate insights from individual leaders, the relationship between both sets of source material draws on approaches used by both historians and educational researchers.

McCulloch and Watts (2003, p.130) point to the benefits of 'breaking down the binary line' between the disciplines of history and education to offer more significant and varied interdisciplinary studies and position researchers 'at the intersection of biography and history'. Within education, historical narrative approaches to understanding how educational leadership in a period of policy change operates between structure and agency, have been considered in studies such as those of Hammersley-Fletcher and Strain (2011), which investigated the intersection of a leader's story and agency with historical policy change in the primary educational sector. In FE research, this synergistic approach between narrative inquiry and narrative analytic traditions offers a greater depth of understanding of the complexities of the relationship between component elements.

Whilst there are differences in the nature of documentary and interview data, there are also relationships between them to consider. Both narratives help to explain how the policy

context can be revealed in documentation and the individual reflections. Narrative analysis is used in this thesis in relation to ‘official’ policy stories in combination with individual more private unofficial narrative stories which can offer insights between ‘structural and agentic’ worlds (Goodley et al. 2004, p.ix). This combination of historical changing policy trajectories, with those of individual professional life history elements, creates understandings of changing relationships between dominant influences, over time.

### *Research intentions*

The focus in this thesis lies in the tacit and explicitly expressed effect of perceptions on leadership approaches to CPD, in a range of different FE organisational contexts. My intention is to create more explicit understandings around the effect of the range of influences on individual leaders and managers. The wide contextual range within FE colleges, the size and scope of samples and use of narrative approaches, offer little scope for generalisation across the sector, or across all general FE colleges. However, there is considerable scope for exploring in depth the range of potential influences on FE leaders and how they operationalise CPD policy, during a corporate period which covers significant structural change.

The issue of traditional educational public service values and those of a corporate business organisational orientation, underlies both documentary and life history data. However, the relationship between these values in this research design, involved not only distinctions between political and individual perspectives but consideration and evaluation of the extent to which values co-existed, were in tension or became balanced over time as the sector developed.

My methodological intention in this research is not limited to extending the evidence base in relation to managerial compliance as developed from Shain and Gleeson (1999), Randle and Brady (1997), Ainley and Bailey (1997) and by many others during the period prior to the reflections by Crowley (2014) and Gleeson (2014). However, it is recognised that this is a theme which resurfaces and is associated with college corporate business external accountability, its financial implications and managerialism, which is developed further in Chapter 2. In my research context it is part of the identification of a wider range of intentions and influences which impinge on leaders and managers when considering specifically how to approach support for CPD. This also involves identifying the value base in terms of distinct or parallel educational or business values. The thesis is concerned with the interaction and relationship between influences, and the assumptions of individual leaders about the relative effects of different influences within their particular CPD leadership contexts.

My methodological approach is intended to inform the extent to which FE leaders feel they have individual agency and discretion, within the effects of a closely monitored

accountability to policy resource contexts, and their own concept of their professional identities. Potential incorporation influences, whose extent may be contested in different leaders' units within a college, may revolve around: the direct and indirect implications of internal monitoring of inspection regimes and outcomes for colleges; issues of college reputation; their market competitive position and/or collaborative context.

### **Leaders and/or managers?**

The interpretation of these terms as used in this thesis is introduced here, then further developed in relation to the literature in chapter 2, and in later chapters in relation to research findings from those who perceived themselves to be operating as leaders and/or managers in different FE college roles and contexts. The respective labels represent sometimes subtle differences in interpretation of frequently integrated and overlapping activities, where the associated concepts of accountability, agency and identity are variously evident and intertwined in practice. The complexity of college leaders' and managers' contexts and activities is reflected in the rather haphazard growth of FE, within a turbulent and shifting environment (Lucas and Unwin, 2009; Avis, 2009).

Those staff with responsibility for supporting and developing CPD in colleges have been labelled as 'leaders' or 'managers', usually to represent different functional roles or different dimensions of their approach to values or activity in the roles. However, leadership or management teams in colleges can offer different permutations of strategic and operational function and styles which cross these boundaries. As Glatter (2014) observes, in his historical reflections on educational administration, leadership and management, the labels within this educational field and colleges have been subject to serial re-labelling reflecting changes of dominant foci within policy and practice. Yet circling around the range of influences on CPD, are the complex effects of structure *and* agency between fundamental educational professional values and those more closely aligned with quasi-market business foci (Gleeson, 2014).

Functional role labels in FE most frequently use the term 'leader' in the pedagogic curricular context and the term 'manager' for those with a structural hierarchical role in relation to staff, although cross-college service roles cross these boundaries. As Lumby (2000) noted in challenging the more uniform assumptions of Randle and Brady (1997) - which was written at the height of managerialist control practices - management and leadership can be more integrated than oppositional. However, they have also been linked respectively to particular contextual practice characteristics. Lumby (2003, p.283) in her study of college distributed leadership, argues that 'leadership and management roles [are] strongly differentiated by hierarchy, those at different levels not only undertaking different activities but impelled by different values'. The concept of leadership may also be slippery in that

culture and vision may be seen as more intangible than business-like management structures, and policy contexts may make for instability and the idea of a shifting hologram (Lumby 2003, p. 284). She found at the point of her research that the term ‘manager’ was mostly used within colleges but those in a leadership role did not use that language of themselves. Finally, she found that ‘daily activity is not divided between administration, management and leadership, but is simultaneously all three’ (Lumby, 2003, p.287).

The notion of leadership and management being intertwined is broadly supported by Bush (2010, p.18) who concludes that ‘The concept of management has been joined, or superseded, by the language of leadership but the activities undertaken [...] resist such labels.’ Whilst mainly focused on schools his analysis has some resonance with FE. Bush does make a distinction between managing external policy as a managerial process and managing internal strategies achieved by formal system management or informal approaches to leadership. However, as a working definition of leadership he acknowledges a wide range of interpretations involving influence rather than authority and personal, professional and moral values compared to government political values. Leadership based on vision may be manipulative as used by charismatic leaders or may be part of a formal planned management strategy. Bush (2010, p.9) argues that the achievement of educational objectives requires the concepts to have ‘equal prominence’. This supersedes the perceptions early in incorporation. such as that of Randle and Brady (1997) and Elliott and Hall (1994) who saw FE dimensions of management as the dominant factor in the context of managerial control.

English (2008) offers a theoretical categorisation using a model of common dimensions *across* leadership and management, which distinguish the context of each dimension. The use of relatively unstructured professional reflective approaches in this thesis, in the different contexts of the leaders and managers allowed the construction of each term to be determined by the individual. This view is nuanced by Gleeson and Knights (2008) who argue that leadership and management are often used interchangeably and should be seen together in context, although they see leadership as a management device, with a potential tension between leadership and professional values.

Management has been used in the FE sector corporate literature, including much policy documentation, to encompass ideas of FE business organisation, from Elliott and Hall (1994) through to Ainley and Bailey (1997) to Crowther (2014). Within this frame it has been seen as a means of structural control involving rational planning, accountability to policy and target setting but there is not a consistent message regarding dominant values. Towards the end of the first decade of FE incorporation use of the term ‘leadership’ gradually gained the ascendancy, particularly in policy documentation from 1997. Although the focus by 1997 was on management of change and widening participation, government reports allied these to more imaginative leadership vision and cultural change with a

blending of public service and business effectiveness. Leadership terminology began to be used in relation to Government reports (Kennedy, 1997, Fryer, 1997), although it may be that this was more about fashions around the use of terminology, than any clear-cut distinction. Although encompassing different forms, leadership has been used to suggest a greater focus on educational curriculum and values, staff support and inspiration (Jupp, 2015). The need for more leadership development was recommended by Foster (2005). The Government White Paper of 2006, whilst sometimes using the term 'leadership' alone interspersed it more frequently with the linked 'leadership and management' term. However, the descriptions of leadership positions recognised its wider application in colleges. Apart from writers who conflated the labels by referring to 'heads' and used management role labels but reflected on leadership such as Briggs (2001), Gleeson and Knights (2008, p.62), meet the labelling issue head on, arguing that 'leadership in FE is an elusive and hard to define concept best understood in the context of the professionals who constitute its practice'. In this respect they recognise the interdependence of leadership and management. However, FE practice operates after incorporation within an ongoing and turbulent context of policy change which affects management accountability and roles.

In order to recognise this conceptual complexity and interdependence of the terms, to avoid undue repetition of the use of leaders and managers, and in view of overall issues involved in leadership encompassing management role functions or vice-versa, in this thesis the term 'leader' is primarily used, as the most common current usage to represent both leadership and management activities of those researched in this study. Except where the context explicitly and solely relates to what is widely recognised as a management function or role in the literature, and specifically differentiates characteristics particularly associated with either the term of 'leader' or 'manager', the former term is taken in this thesis to encompass characteristics relevant to both concepts of leadership and management in relation to CPD.

The shift from the use of the terms management to leadership was regarded by Hooper (2001) as a result of the need for staff to cope with the ongoing management of change in FE and was in relation to its widespread use for the compulsory educational sector. He confirms a widely held view that management is more closely regarded as being linked to rational procedures and systems and leadership to people but the ways in which the two concepts are defined 'can be the subject of endless, often circular, debate' (Horsfall, 2001, p.2). However, structures interact with people whilst leadership implies followers and may more closely relate to 'mission, direction and inspiration' (Sawbridge, 2001). These two former characteristics can also be directly linked to some forms of business strategy. Management of change can involve leadership approaches such as motivation, culture change, moral leadership and influence. Conversely leadership may involve informal mediation as well as transactional forms of management which might be affected by the relationships between manager and those led.



The distinctions between middle and senior leadership and management are complicated by the diversity of different structures and size of GFEC. The broad distinction between senior and middle leaders is discussed further in chapter 6, in terms of senior business strategic cross-college responsibility and those with a greater focus on implementation of college policy, although there is some scope for strategic consideration of leadership and management at both levels.

### **Continuing professional development – terms and scope**

My focus involves leadership perceptions of what constitutes an overall concept of the range of continuing professional development (CPD) activities. In this thesis my primary concern is with CPD, including those activities, both formally and informally organised which are led and supported by leaders for their staff, and lie beyond initial pedagogic, occupational and vocational education and training,

Terminology used in this area in the literature covers staff development, professional development, professional updating and professional learning yet each term offers a slightly different emphasis. Jones and O'Brien (2014) discuss the relationship between individual and organisational development; 'staff' can carry with it the idea of employees being developed and has external policy connotations attached. However, this raises the issue of assumptions perceived about the role and purpose of CPD both for individuals and organisations. Underlying this is a broader notion of continuing development, which may involve different threads and timescales, and may be linked to one individual and their career development, hence the complexity of CPD leadership considerations. As a leader or manager, the role in relation to CPD of staff may involve systematic organisation, support or mediation of opportunities. In its widest sense professional development is expected to be demonstrated and led in many formal and informal ways; from coaching and mentoring to encouragement to develop communities of practice and skill development practices, and delivery of formal learning events (Stoll, 2013). Most of these forms would be expected to be found within colleges and other organisations in such a diverse sector as FE and this range forms a framework for a CPD leadership investigation in colleges and its potential scope.

The characteristic of myriad identities of staff and leaders in FE, is explored in this study in relation to individual leaders' perception of professional development and its aims and values. The theme is developed from an earlier literature review of the diversity of the FE sector in terms of professional development leadership (Cartwright, 2013). Different emphases within the development of professionals are evident within the CPD literature conceptualising it as professional learning, skills and knowledge enhancement and updating. Delivered by formal and more informal means of professional development, this

may involve peer, group or individual means. Whilst this thesis focuses on the options for leading and managing CPD, rather than directly on the professional learning process, it is relevant to take the potential forms and purpose of CPD into account. These may be included and supported by leaders and may or may not encourage teacher self-agency in relation to their CPD. Therefore, it is necessary to investigate these approaches in the light of the leaders' options for their strategy for appropriate mixes of CPD in context, whether directly delivered or indirectly supported. A key question here is not only how the mix is determined, but the influence of different educational and business values and purposes, in relation to staff and teams with very different professional characteristics and histories.

CPD can be seen as an integrated ongoing process as Husband (2018), Broad (2016) and Lucas and Unwin (2009) argue, seeing CPD as a trajectory which includes pre- to in-service training, compulsory recording and its aftermath. Neither is development of professionals necessarily seen as being limited to the direct pedagogical role in FE. This thesis aimed to achieve an integrated overview of the concept of FE professional development differentiated by individual leader, their role, their professional life experience and the relationship to public policy.

The boundaries of the application of the term CPD are blurred by the diverse experience and needs of staff in colleges, whose identity may lie within their academic, occupational, practice or particular teaching context. Thus, teacher training may be only part of their staff professional development and precede or follow other forms of disciplinary, curriculum, academic or occupational professional development, and in the literature may be seen through the eyes of teacher or leader identities.

Whilst this study is not primarily concerned with professional career trajectories per se, as is the focus of some studies in Higher Education in this area (Floyd, 2009), this aspect may be expected to impinge on individual FE leadership development options for CPD. The combination of policy and individual assumptions and experience offers potential to see ways in which relationships between occupational, professional and personal values may be identified as having been influential on overall leadership approaches to CPD.

### **Conceptual and theoretical foci**

In the process of considering the literature on incorporated colleges, from an historical, policy and individual leader perspective, some particular theoretical themes emerge. These relate to both business and education influences on leadership and management and to concepts of professionalism and professional identities in FE. Both internal and external concepts of accountability, organisational and external agency, as considered by Møller (2013), are explored in this thesis. This is seen in relation to nuances of CPD as it is perceived, translated, mediated and reflected in leaders' individual, organisational and

historical leadership and management roles and contexts. The historical dimension is not only one of gaining the perceptions of those who led in the sector across their career, but of aligning them with the historical changes in relation to the parallel contemporary policy changes. Lucas and Unwin (2009), using a framework involving expansive agentic CPD opportunities compared to restrictive barriers in colleges, argued for the need for managerial support for the former, including informal support and for a need to integrate initial and continuing professional development.

Whilst this study is not primarily a study of professionalism or professional learning - rather their impact on CPD leadership options - both of these concepts map onto the understandings sought, of the way in which leaders in the FE sector see their leadership and their professional development role and values. In Lingfield's (2012) report to the government, professionalism in FE is taken to include elements of disciplinary mastery and expertise updating, and as a respected vocation which is publicly accountable. This forms a backdrop to ongoing CPD leadership developments in this area after the compulsory FE CPD era.

The thesis explores the myriad ways in which all the concepts introduced in this introduction are interpreted, in terms of understandings of professional orientations, and the regulatory structure imposed on colleges, which applied to the particularly diverse college contextual range. This creates a context for CPD in which the influence of pedagogy, skills, competence, occupational, vocational and personal elements of the concepts, exist and co-locate within FE colleges. A strength of the research approach is to enable the identification of, and relationship between, a mix of factors which may influence a particular leader in terms of how they think about, and operationalise their leadership of professional development within their functional management roles.

### **Professional Development leadership and management: myriad lenses and connections**

In summary, these initial themes from the literature, arising from the background to FE incorporation for colleges, suggested a need for research into leaders' and managers' priorities for CPD in terms of both historical policy changes, and a need to investigate the breadth of their perceptions and experience of CPD.

To span the range of formal and informal accessible professional development activities, both self-initiated and leader supported, a professional life-history approach offered an opportunity for deeper reflection on these issues. Alongside this, the policy discourse within documentary sources, which emphasised skill development for learners for economic benefit and employability, with economic effectiveness as a return on public investment in business terms, extended the implications to the focus and scope of CPD for lecturing staff.

The series of national reports from Lingfield (2012) under a Conservative/Liberal democrat coalition government and previously that of Leitch (2006), Foster (2005), Fryer (1997) and Kennedy (1997), under Labour governments, with different emphases, relate to a focus in the literature on staff developing professional skills which support an economic skill development policy objective. Teaching skill development, whether of basic literacy and numeracy or specific occupational skill updating, is also a recurring theme throughout the period although its prioritisation for individual leaders is less clear (Orr, 2009). For colleges though it was linked to the short-term application and impact of measurable and demonstrable political outcomes, aligned to organisational financial viability. The balance of emphases between economic and social justice outcomes varied with the political complexion of the government. The employer skill focus was emphasised by Conservative governments but the 1997 Labour government combined it with widening participation levels and the raising of standards. Encouragement for collaboration followed, but the coalition government allied this to a more local market orientation to student choice albeit with funding restrictions (Hodgson et al., 2015).

Although in this thesis CPD is used as a lens through which to consider FE leadership and management perceptions and activity, the aim is to identify connections, commonalities and differences between influences, based on the professional experience of the individual leader and manager and that arising from national policy. The intention was to identify situated insights from the context of leading teams in the respective college and policy historical contexts. An international historical perspective of CPD is evaluated by Cervero (2001) who reflects on 'corporatization', and the associated political regulation associated with accountability. However, he acknowledges the scope for individual and corporate benefits of CPD, both of which may be relevant in such a diverse sector as FE. The political, discipline, occupational and organisational influences require assessment of their relative dominance for different CPD purposes and in different contexts, over time. For leaders and managers in FE the implications of both the external political and internal contextual circumstances in which they operated, alongside the particular perceptions, needs and aspirations of the staff that they worked with – and their own professional experience – suggest a complex web of interactions between the influences upon them.

This chapter has indicated how and why points of interaction are sought between leaders' own construction of their perceptions of policy, funding and business influences on CPD, and that presented to the sector nationally via the policy documentation. This involves a form of boundary crossing between individual professional experience and policy understandings, application and contexts (Lewis, 2008). The combination of insights from the different data are intended to offer a balanced consideration rather than one data set dominating the other or as background context only (Rury, 2006). The research aims to contribute to understanding of the impact and application of policy *and* individual

professional experience to potential enhancement of leading and managing college CPD in its widest sense. Potential transferability to leaders in comparable contexts offers scope to make a positive contribution to leadership development and options for the team and/or college in which they operate. There are potential consequences for making the most appropriate use of staff resource and enhancing commitment and professional reputation, whilst balancing individual development against organisational needs.

Chapter 2 reviews and evaluates in more detail the empirical and theoretically based research literature contributing to understanding issues of CPD leadership and management during the incorporated FE college period. It develops understanding and use of key terms used in FE research and identifies issues and arguments which are central to CPD support.

Chapter 3 focuses on a justification for my methodological choices to support my framework for this research, in relation to the underlying research issue of the range of influences on leaders and managers in leading CPD in FE colleges. This chapter discusses in further detail the research design and approach used in identifying and analysing the different data and their association.

Chapter 4 is concerned with the sector historical narrative from a documentary perspective on post-incorporation FE CPD policy and its associated literature and implications for college FE leadership. It is recognised in this chapter that documentary perceptions are expressed both implicitly and explicitly within key documents, which allude to or have direct reference to CPD and are expected to exert an influence on college leadership.

The focus in Chapter 5 is on analysis of the reflective professional life history narrative findings of middle leaders and managers in FE colleges, within different staff contexts in supporting CPD. It offers insights from leaders who lead CPD within diverse departmental units within colleges at second tier levels and from those with cross-college responsibilities.

Chapter 6 focuses on consideration of reflections from senior managers with experience in corporate FE across colleges at a strategic level, and the historic influences of policy on business and educational orientations to post-incorporation FE. The professional life history narratives of FE senior leaders and managers offer insights from broader but individual perspectives, compared to that of the middle managers who have a focus on their departmental or cross-college service role at their level in the college structure.

The final chapter, chapter 7, is intended to fulfil several purposes. It is concerned with: key conclusions and implications arising from the research findings; my research contribution in this area; reflections on the research process and the consequences of the boundaries to, and potential of, my overall research questions. The chapter also evaluates the ways in which my methodological choices developed and suggests strengths and limitations of my research. Finally, some recommendations, arising from the implications of the research,

are offered for potential transferability to similar, or comparable contexts of CPD leadership approaches, and scope for further research development is suggested.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW: CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT IN FURTHER EDUCATION**

#### **Introduction and Literature overview**

This chapter reviews and evaluates the empirical and theoretically based research literature, contributing to understandings of continuing professional development (CPD) leadership and management in further education colleges (FE), during the first few decades of the incorporated FE colleges period. Particular attention is paid to those aspects which can be further developed in this thesis to help to understand the history and concepts involved, such as managerialism. CPD is taken to include leadership, management, and support for the ongoing development of staff in colleges after initial education and training, both by formal organisation of the means to do so and informal practices.

Following this introduction is an explanation of terms and concepts considered and an evaluation of the implications of the literature in its historical context. The literature based on FE college senior and middle managers and leaders' respective roles, is followed in the penultimate section by a review of the ways in which concepts of identity, accountabilities, agency, professionalism and managerialism are dealt with, separately and in combination, in the literature. The chapter concludes with a summary of the potential leadership and management CPD implications arising from the literature and their link to my methodology in chapter 3, and policy developed in chapter 4.

Whilst chapter 4 is primarily concerned with associated issues for colleges derived from the CPD FE policy literature and historical documentary material, there is a clear overlap with CPD college leadership and management discussed in this current chapter. Chapter 2 considers the literature relating to the context of the sector and its colleges, and its significance for the impact in particular on leadership of different college units. These units can be, but are not necessarily, based on a coherent overall wider sector history, and may not share a single college culture or disciplinary base. Internal college units cover a range of different academic and vocational practices, staff values, college specific histories, influences and contexts. Whilst some literature focuses college-wide, this may conflate the differences in college units in concentrating on a wider college perspective. However, there is a small body of literature developed in relation to specific areas of academic provision for young people, adult and community education and overall vocational and higher education (HE) in FE, which offer pointers towards differentiation (Elliott, 2013; Swan and Swain, 2010; Jameson and Hillier, 2008; Blackmore, 2007; Briggs, 2005 and Robson et al., 2004).

My main research focus is on the literature during the incorporation period concerned directly with leading CPD, rather than the detailed processes of professional learning itself. Whilst the focus of CPD literature shifted more to the concept of professional learning, widely interpreted alongside pedagogic and learner outcomes for both staff and students, for example in Crowley (2014), some work on its leadership and management continued. Taking the overview lenses within the literature, of broadly business and/or educational orientations of leaders and managers, and recognising the historical dimensions of public policy and life history narratives, the scope for implementation of CPD in different organisational units within colleges, is evaluated in this thesis.

As historical research, contemporary literature across the central period of my focus from the early 1990s to the 2010s is considered. The intention is to engage with the trajectory of the development of research themes, to link to the leaders' own historical reflections considered in my research. In this context, consideration is given to identifying evidence for potential co-existence of business and educational influences on leadership and management of CPD in FE, in comparison with conflict between them. The different ways in which particular research studies on FE have interpreted this relationship, create a kaleidoscope of influences, which in Lumby's terms form a need for research in this ever-changing sector and can be seen as a 'three-dimensional moving hologram' (Lumby, 2003, p.291). The underlying themes in the FE literature offer potential for further insights into the way individual professional leaders and managers perceive and understand their contexts of CPD leadership. Within different contexts used in the literature, the selection of particular emphases is often related broadly to the FE colleges or sector as a whole, and less commonly has a focus on the differential implications for leading in different units and contexts *within* general FE colleges.

### ***CPD and policy change***

The general FE policy context and literature developed in chapter 4 is here related specifically to CPD college leadership. Literature of the first decade on FE CPD following incorporation was primarily focused on the underlying effects of the Conservative business-orientated incorporation policy change after 1993 (Betts, 1996). The contractual consequences of changes in staffing responsibilities in college corporations, and the resulting early period of contractual disputes, along with the focus on managerialism, became major themes in the literature (Shain and Gleeson, 1999; Levačić and Glatter, 1997). This revolved around the move from the 'Silver Book' national conditions of service agreements to new contracts after incorporation, which are widely agreed to have increased workloads and college accountability and did not usually specify CPD entitlement or structures (Ainley and Bailey, 1997).

Some of the evaluation in the literature emphasises the managerial accountability affecting CPD opportunities, perhaps at the expense of a focus on resource pressures for colleges



more widely. The move to national average levels of funding (ALF) had a variable effect on colleges but research is very limited on the relationship between individual FE college ALF and effects on CPD. The means for the Department for Education and Employment in 1995 to control contracts of employment in colleges, lay in their requirement for corporations to certify a commitment to 'no less flexible', (i.e. more business efficient), contracts than previously before grant release (FEFC, 1995). Few colleges, would have been in a position to offer this assurance, and 355 were members of the College Employers Forum, 'which took an aggressive approach' to more flexible contracts (Ainley and Bailey, p.25). However, a strategic prioritisation issue for funded college CPD is reflected in this, but the literature perhaps downplays the effects on resource tightening for some colleges post-incorporation. In addition, there is little in the literature on alternatives during this early period, such as more informal means of CPD and especially in relation to part-time staff.

Whilst the Labour governments after 1997 adjusted policy emphases towards ideas of social justice, the market, skills development and economic emphases remained key criteria, with greater regulation of targets. Nominally there was lecturer 'agency' as to the form of recording CPD activity after 2007. The focus in the literature moved towards a higher CPD profile with compulsory CPD from 2007 to 2012, and there was further, although limited, development of some professional standards, following earlier regulation of initial teacher training. By the second and third decades of incorporation the literature moved on to both a college-wide concept of CPD but also a focus on development by both formal and more informal elements (Broad, 2015; Avis, 2009; Lucas, 2004 and Avis, 2002). There is scope to build upon this by relating the influence of leaders' own specific experience and contexts.

Studies around teacher trainees and their subsequent engagement with CPD, such as that by Husband (2018); Broad (2015, 2016) and Lucas and Unwin (2009) had a primary focus on lecturers, but also notes the scope for leaders, not just to organise formal CPD but to support it, according to the differentiated professional needs of staff. Although the extent of post-incorporation FE literature had increased after 2000, it is still relatively limited compared to the scope of that on the school sector, and in relation to a focus on specific college units within colleges. It had taken a decade from incorporation to develop into a body of CPD policy statements and reports, instigated by national FE bodies and government. Some of these were based on empirical research, but by their nature and purpose, some documentation lacked critical analysis of the effect and variability on colleges and individual leaders. Overall, the body of literature has grown but it is still considered to be widely but relatively sparsely ranged in scope and is spread across frequent sector structural change periods (Greatbatch and Tate, 2018; Crowley, 2014; Gleeson, 2014; Bailey, 2003; Lumby and Simkins, 2002). Many studies are still based on 'the assumptive world of the researcher that is laid before us, rather than the actuality of the participants' lived experiences' (Elliott, 2013, p.6). The extent of the policy documentation and sector

ongoing change had substantial ongoing implications for CPD, inspection and government funding targets, within the quite different types and experiences of staff within colleges. Whilst policy focused literature grew, Crowley (2014) and Lumby and Simkins (2002) recognised the still relatively limited extent of research and thinking in FE in relation to leadership and management of FE and this particularly applies to CPD.

The historical evolution of the sector derived from documentation is commonly included as background context in many studies, both to reflect the major changes on incorporation and the ongoing influence of policy implications. This is a theme in the literature developed further in chapter 4. The ongoing rate of change in FE over incorporation decades involved some cyclical policy movements, for example local authority strategic involvement across colleges which increased after 2001. The political encouragement to compete or collaborate also changed over time (Avis, 2009; Simmonds, 2008) and this offers scope for consideration via the professional reflections of leaders, and through historical analysis of documentary materials.

The historical framework of my research requires literature to be seen in its contemporary context, alongside professional life history reflections, in order to evaluate the impact of influences on CPD ideas and leadership practice. Yet there has been considered to be a lack of extensive empirical FE studies over time (Coffield, 2013; Hughes et al., 1996). The literature of the early post-incorporation period had a clear focus on evaluations of the contemporary political situation and some of the consequences for colleges. As the contractual disputes of the early 1990s waned, the FE context moved on in terms of a focus on CPD quality and standards, as its profile rose.

Some studies are primarily concerned with initial professional development and others relate to development of leaders themselves. Whilst both these areas have some relevance to CPD, they are not the prime focus of this thesis. The body of literature concerned with professional development of initial professional training and in-service course-based professional development of FE college staff, is often focused on the learners rather than the leadership of particular teams (Avis, 2002; Robson, 1996). The former is relevant to discussion of CPD outcomes as background to college leadership influences on CPD. Since FE in-service professional development includes initial pedagogic, but not initial vocational, training and development, it does raise some associated CPD development issues to explore such as the relationship to wider vocational occupational communities of practice and knowledge transfer processes (Broad, 2016). The role of leaders and managers within colleges is less well-evidenced particularly beyond formalised and organisationally centralised CPD initiatives. However, 'informal learning and sharing expertise as part of everyday practice' is recognised to be a potential influential factor in CPD, and one which could be more open to leaders of part-time staff (Lucas and Unwin, 2009, p.428).

Concepts of professionalism and managerialism are widely considered in the literature perhaps unsurprisingly, given the sector diversity in terms of values, staff background and multiple professional identities alongside the impetus for new public management practices. The nature and relevance of these concepts to both middle and senior CPD leadership is further evaluated in the penultimate section of this chapter.

Structural change has been widely presented as a constant throughout the incorporated period. There is some historical reflection in the literature which offers insights into the overall scale of change in terms of culture, values and practice. Such studies tended to be strongly influenced by policy research questions with semi-structured methodologies regarding an emphasis on corporate staffing contractual and funding changes. In the decade following incorporation, the existing expectations and roles in the area of professional development were limited, and still lay within the earlier pre-incorporation broader context of staff development, previously directed and supported by local educational authorities (Castling, 1996; FEU, 1987). Despite national funding being incorporated into college budgets from 1993 its allocation to CPD was not a funding imperative until after 2000, and even then, not a significant one (FEFC, 2000).

Post-incorporation there is an emphasis in the literature on the impact of the change to state funders and the idea of incorporation creating college autonomy to determine their strategy. Some studies accepted uncritically the rhetoric associated with the legalistic definition of organisational autonomy by corporate status, despite the majority of funding coming to colleges from the state and requiring extensive accountability (Bassett-Jones and Brewer, 1997; FEFC, 1992). By 2008, Simmons used the incorporation discourse of freedom for self-governance but within a quasi-market context, not a free one, recognising the agentic limitations. Gradually the literature developed to include a greater awareness of the implications of new internal and external accountabilities to funders, inspectors and other bodies such as auditors (Graystone, 2015). Initially college strategic plans moved from those of local authorities to those produced by colleges but submitted to the FEFC, but were limited to the areas revolving around a demonstrable business case and the financial ability and capacity of colleges to deliver the plan (Coopers and Lybrand Deloitte, 1992).

In some respects, staff turnover and contractual limitations since incorporation influenced CPD. The political change of emphasis regarding the main purposes of the sector and of CPD after the period of Labour government beginning in 1997, gradually moved the literature onto issues of degrees of collaboration and trust within larger amalgamated college units. After 2012 CPD largely reverted to an organisational matter and become a college-wide responsibility (Jameson, 2012, 2010; Lambert, 2012; Cosner, 2009). College priorities evolved but were still determined largely by a belief in resulting resource efficiency gains in a climate of target-driven resource pressure.

Empirical studies within the specific area of further education leadership of professional development are limited and include a focus on the policy and models of CPD. They do illustrate some differentiation of purpose and effect, broadly between skills-based and wider educational development approaches to leadership, (for example Briggs, 2005; Lumby et al., 2005). Studies such as that of Iszatt-White et al. (2011) and Jameson (2006), were on the one hand closer to professional training manuals, and on the other, placed their emphasis on a wider disciplinary view of business management theory. Both were more generically business orientated than the educational and learner-focused work. Alongside this there were investigations which emphasised the pedagogical implications and related learning outcomes of incorporation (Lumby et al., 2005), but rarely differences in departmental unit contexts or their historical evolution. Studies such as that by Jameson (2006) were produced or supported by government funded bodies, such as the Centre for Excellence in Leadership (CEL) and placed themselves carefully between the requirements of policy and its consequences for leadership training and development, but their espoused need to be informed by and for practitioners. However, it is noteworthy that within their business theoretical base the practitioners interviewed within the Jameson study were all identified as high-achievers, publicly recognised nationally for achievement of rational and measurable policy targets. This was based on the notion of 'effective' leadership and management 'better' achieved and thus more 'effective and efficient' in organisational funding and development terms. The idea presented was that 'best practice' leadership would have had a direct outcome effect, although there is limited evidence in FE to support this so far. The focus of such studies was on quasi-market factors and organisational financial viability and survival, during periods of significant and ongoing change and resource constraints (Iszatt-White, 2011; Jameson, 2006). However, the divergence between views of the need for dominance of moral educational values, and those of business values, is contested by both business orientated researchers and those with a concern for traditional educational value-based positions, such as Elliott (2013).

The wide-ranging concepts discussed in the literature which may influence CPD leadership may be considered in relation to each other, rather than separately. The characteristics of business and/or educational foci are seen through issues of values, identities, notions of agency, professionalism and policy and managerial accountabilities. These concepts may influence CPD and its leaders within FE sector colleges and their internal organisational units in a variety of ways. The conceptual relationships are evaluated in the penultimate section of this chapter on conceptual understandings. Some researchers note the relative lack of empirical evidence from individuals in terms of storied data and lived leadership experience, although there is some literature exploring leadership and management in the sector via this means (Iszatt-White et al., 2011; Lumby and Tomlinson, 2000). Also, some literature built on earlier studies which compared pre-1992 local education authority CPD provision experience, and its historical cultures and practices, with the context of CPD post-

incorporation experience (Robson, 1996; Avis, 2002). This is of relevance when considering evidence from leaders with pre- and post-incorporation experience.

As Lumby and Simkins (2002) noted, the research based on reports and policy and that aimed at practitioners, tended to be more instrumental with qualified, implied or explicit references intended to suggest direct influence on pedagogic practice. This policy orientated stance is developed further in Chapter 4 in relation to the policy documentation and its associated literature.

In terms of professionalism, Sachs (2001) on professional identities of Australian teachers, was concerned with status and policy, and argues that self-narratives suggest that it can be defined within such areas as expertise, elements of agency and self-professional control. In doing so she distinguishes between managerial professionalism, democratic professionalism and traditional professional control via the profession itself. An Australian study of comparable post-compulsory education managers by Mulcany (2004) saw senior managers as primarily connecting policy to organisational strategy, and other managers connecting the strategy to staff. Yet she acknowledges that corporate, collegial, managerial and professional cultures all form influences on staff identity and leadership. The extent to which they do so in English colleges needs further evidence.

Empirical studies based on staff in Welsh colleges were also considered, given their different policy and national contexts. Jephcote and Salisbury (2009) reported on three teachers who felt increasingly affected by managerialist targets and performativity pressures, at the expense of a wider student need focus. This was especially significant for leadership in a country with separate funding, inspection and different social disadvantage circumstances to England. Husband (2018) considered the longer-term CPD impact in Wales of those having completed initial teacher training. Both forms and accessibility of CPD were considered, including college variations, from prescriptive training to mentoring; only three respondents had line management for staff themselves. Both studies note that recruitment and training, particularly of vocational and part-time staff, was limited.

### **Leadership and/or Management in the literature**

An initial consideration in Chapter 1 in evaluating conceptual understandings in the FE literature was to clarify which used separate terms of 'leader' or 'manager', or a suggestion of an integration of roles and functions via 'leader and manager' terminology, since this directly affected the assumptions and effect of a range of different individual and corporate influences on CPD. However, the questions of how CPD operated overall raises issues for both roles. The issue of the potential variation and balances involved between political quasi-business organisational corporate influences, and those arising from traditional educational and social values, has been seen in some literature as being diametrically in

opposition, but in other studies as part of the overall balancing role. The term leader or leader and manager is used in this thesis, and often in much literature, mostly interchangeably in recognition of the integration of the roles, except where particular role terminology is appropriate to the focus being considered. Bush (2010) argues that the terms have developed from the use of the term administration and that they can be distinguished, in the school context, to focus on leadership involving values and purpose; management on rational management and accountability. However, the use of administrative terminology in FE is both historic and used in corporate colleges to primarily involve business-facing activities, although measurement of achievement of targets by leaders as managing implementation of policy, is often loosely referred to as administration, as opposed to activities involving educational professional judgement.

The CPD literature suggests both terms are involved and are not so distinct especially in FE, given the diversity of values, local contexts of organisations and forms of management accountability to both internal and external mandates (Mårtensson and Roxå, 2016). In this research my intent is to consider the extent of integration and separation in leading CPD in practice. Whilst a 'leader' can be represented as one with individual, internal organisational and transactional roles for teams, much documentary policy literature uses the term from an organisational perspective in a transformational sense, and sees leadership system management as an overriding purpose.

English (2008) theorises the interrelationship of leadership and management dimensions, with policy and organisational structures as boundaries to both. He suggests that the leadership element may be more likely to challenge external boundaries whilst management is more likely to be bound by such accountabilities internally. This may suggest for FE CPD a need to see leadership and management as encompassing and separating the concepts in order to consider systems, moral value and purpose. Elliott (2013) flags a moral and ethical link between collaborative leadership and performativity around shared values, commitment and organisational business survival, but the relationship between these concepts is complex and leadership creativity may be needed to achieve appropriate CPD.

### ***Historical development of leadership and management of CPD in FE***

It is clear from the research areas covered by Robson (1996) that the main CPD focus during that early incorporation period was on structured, centralised formal business development processes, and that there was a changing role for what had been previously defined as 'staff development' (Robson, 1996, p.4; Castling, 1996). Whilst there have been some studies which traced the historical development of predominant values across FE in terms of policy and leadership, these have tended to focus on the concepts of managerialism, policy compliance and different notions of what constitutes professionalism (Shain and Gleeson, 1999; Randle and Brady, 1997). Subsequent historical studies used the development of a quasi-marketization lens (Foskett, 2002), a focus on HE led FE initial teacher training or

aspects such as diversity training for the leaders themselves (Lumby et al., 2005), rather than CPD in its widest formal and informal sense supported by particular college leaders. Some leadership studies are strongly influenced by their association with government funded support and development initiatives, including the relationship between teaching quality and achievement levels and the focus on skills training. (Nash et al., 2008; Jameson, 2006). However, the requirements of students and employers did not necessarily converge into a clear CPD staff professional focus. Diverse CPD needs of the sector were noted but there were assumptions that the policy change agenda was paramount and an assumption that generic college-wide CPD dominated.

Historically, a significant focus on CPD leadership in FE colleges revolves around the period of mandatory CPD from 2007-2012 and the involvement of the Institute for Learning (IfL) as the FE sector ‘professional body’ intended also to have a regulatory role (Crowley, 2014). Research was concerned more broadly with professional learning and standards rather than necessarily directly with its leadership within colleges (Crowley, 2014; Orr 2008; Gleeson and James, 2007; Lucas, 2004). However, the government reports, and IfL’s own reviews which were partly based on limited empirical data, do offer some explanation of the national discourse regarding FE CPD which was considered to have influenced college leadership to some extent. This is evaluated further in chapter 4 within the policy context.

#### *Senior leaders and managers*

Much of the empirically based literature is at the level of senior FE managers and leaders and specifically principals and chief executives of colleges or senior leaders with cross-college responsibilities. This senior strategic focus in the literature often dealt with high profile, accessible leaders considered within the sector to have run successful colleges in relation to policy and targets. For researchers, this level of research participant would have been more easily identifiable in view of their market and promotional awareness and presence in highly competitive and publicly focused roles, but this may have provided self-edited public openness (Iszatt-White et al., 2011; Jameson, 2006; Lumby et al., 2005; Withers, 1999; 1998; Ainley and Bailey, 1997; Elliott and Hall, 1994).

Viewed from this level of management, a principal’s concern with CPD was a small part of the strategic college-wide consideration of CPD. The effects of funding changes, particularly from the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) from 1993 and business strategic consideration, increasingly dominated studies, both theoretical and empirical, involving target driven accountability and managerialist agendas which were the focus of a range of research studies (Fletcher, 2015). This also encouraged more formal college-wide organised system focused professional development.

The study of Iszatt-White et al. (2011) of senior managers was supported by government funding in the form of the CEL. The role of the CEL - a national agency operating as a charitable trust between 2003 and 2008, as part of the Labour government 'Success for All' (2002) initiative - was to support the development of sector leadership skills. In the FE White Paper (2006) remit of the CEL was extended to the establishment of a mandatory qualification for new FE Principals and a role in sector quality enhancement. Supported by a university management school, CEL commissioned a range of empirical research-based studies which encompassed a wider range than senior FE management, from college governors to middle management and those leading diversity and adult and community provision. These included research outputs of wide-ranging studies in terms of public sector business-orientated educational theory in relation to FE senior leaders, but much was closely associated with CEL philosophy and government policy. In this respect, whilst acknowledging the existence of formal and informal CPD, elements of centralised formal college FE practice of professional development were highlighted (Iszatt-White et al., 2011; Jameson, 2006). In 2008 CEL was merged with the Quality Improvement Agency to form the Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS).

External corporate accountability led by FE senior managers meant a closer relationship with national policy directives. Therefore, studies of senior management are often focused on strategy and funding and are cross college. Initial evaluations of college responses to strategic planning recognised that whilst colleges were required to plan for human resources it was in the context of accountability for staff costs (FEFC, 1992). There was rare reference to wider FE CPD in senior management literature, and initial practices were based on the historical owing to the speed of implementation of incorporation. There was some suggestion of a shared rhetoric around college visions but a recognition of the dominance of business implications for colleges (Drodge and Cooper, 1997). The influence of the quasi-market in FE created by incorporation encouraged the view in the literature that the 1992 FHE Act made 'colleges completely autonomous' (Bassett-Jones and Brewer 1997, p.53) but this notion was not always qualified by its funding accountability limitations for senior managers. This led to what their sample colleges in the literature alluded to as a learner-driven needs and outcome ethos, but within the context of the resource-driven agenda. A rare exception to this particular senior management CPD focus is in Mackay and Wakeling's (2014) reflections on leading learning in FE as a process of support and influence on CPD, which acknowledges the varying impact of any CPD form on individuals but a tenuous diffuse route between action and outcomes.

Bennett and Hagon (1997), within a study of three colleges, did identify one college which offered an extensive staff development programme in both curriculum and management development. However, it was noted that fragmented individual staff development was delegated to middle managers in restructured departments, whilst centralised organisational



staff development training strategy was developed more fully by senior managers. Thus, CPD leadership at senior and middle management levels involved different or split responsibilities.

The implications of some of the foci in the literature on FE managers relates directly to the way in which the public policy discourses generally represent the strategic function and style of CPD across FE colleges after incorporation. Such a focus does not necessarily represent the subtleties of understandings, approaches and interpretations which may be evidenced within the professional life histories and experiences of senior or middle managers.

#### *Middle leaders and managers*

At middle leadership and management levels in FE, the literature has a focus on leaders' role, identity and values. In some cases, the policy business entrepreneurial foci emerge in the literature, as well as the relative influences of managerial and educational professional values. Based on a small-scale questionnaire of those with human resource or staff development roles, Orr (2009) argued for a gap existing between practice and policy in professional development. He maintained that pragmatic financial expediency and structural accountability was seen as dominant over individual CPD values and outcomes. The context of his research was that of compulsory CPD immediately after 2007 but this does suggest that a corporate business ethos was entrenched by this period.

Although Beresford and Michels (2014) argue for the existence of numerous studies of middle managers, this could only be justified for FE by including reference to those within higher education, and those relating to businesses outside that of educational sectors. Their own references suggest a small number of researchers have focused on this area with several different aspects covered in each. Even by 2011 the role of 'first tier managers' in FE is still being described as 'critically neglected within the literature' and its diversity, labelling, and the extent of leadership and management functions and responsibilities appear to be wide ranging (Page, 2011, p.101). The scope of the middle manager role, as subject leaders is also demonstrated by Page to include teaching observations and appraisal of their teams, some budgetary responsibility and clear involvement with quality procedures, yet day-to-day fire-fighting was recognised as being frequent. Other forms of CPD for the staff for whom they are responsible is noteworthy for receiving little attention.

Within the literature on middle managers, Briggs offered a model of practice which posited a sequential process, informed firstly by personal and group professional values, then taking into account others' professional roles and values, organisational and then policy influences. The model is predicated on the assumption of shared college-wide values and the assumption of 'effectiveness' in the organisation in meeting targets. It is argued from the view that different individual value-based identities are *less* important than the differential

status between academic and service middle managers. Therefore, this must raise the wider question of the potential differential variability of leader's histories, cultures and expectations within different FE college organisational units. This is especially the case since the conclusion is argued on the basis of general FE colleges rather than the value-base of the sixth-form evidence from the college, which is closer to the school sector experience (Briggs 2001; 2005; 2007). Briggs (2003) does argue that 'mechanical' structural organisational needs can be complemented, by being met alongside the more 'organic' individual needs of students and staff, but the relationship between these elements needed further exploration.

Whilst there is some focus on middle managers' identities having common professional values it does not follow that this is the case within different contexts and professional experiences and history. There is often only incidental mention in the leadership literature of the specific focus of middle managers' professional development and rarely how its leadership is perceived to be practised. Lumby et al. (2005) however, acknowledge that whilst it is possible to measure some variables which relate to skills and certain behaviours, what was missing from these knowledge-production processes were qualitative knowledge claims derived from stories told by practitioners, regarded as essential to establishing relevance and coherence with the realities of lived experience.

In the case of studies of FE middle managers there has been a focus on colleges dealing with the 14-19 years' agenda sometimes within FE mixed economy general colleges but sometimes as separate sixth-form colleges under FE regulations (Briggs, 2005). The extent of studies within the wider area of general further education college leadership of professional development is more limited. Fewer studies consider in comparable detail both middle and senior manager's positions and fewer still the specific focus of leading CPD, especially via individual lived experience processes. However, the theme of managerialism versus professionalism, which had such an influence on the literature of the first decade of incorporation, was related specifically to middle managers by Gleeson and Shain (1999). In this influential case study of these managers, which focused on degrees of compliance with policy, in a period of strained industrial relations, and set against further research on lecturing staff perceptions, they concluded that the majority of middle managers exercised a form of strategic compliance following incorporation.

Although degrees of compliance were evident in such studies, a contrast between conflict or integration of managerial and professional educational values can be implied and extracted from the data reported. In some cases, this was partly related to the professional life history characteristics of the leaders involved, although this aspect is less well developed. Despite the recognition of the complexities and ambiguities of middle management business and professional orientations across the sector, strategic compliers can be seen as brokers manoeuvring between business and educational professional

orientations. This is a balancing act which continues to have relevance as business values and practices continue to develop throughout the corporate period. The question is how far the balance between professional and business became one of co-existence in determining fundamental CPD leadership approaches.

In their study of middle managers, Gleeson and Knights (2008) reflected on middle managers reluctant to become leaders, but noted that leadership was a difficult concept to define in the diverse FE context. Although this study also has a focus on the relationship between policy and practice, Gleeson and Knights began to argue that business notions of accountability and inspection were becoming more dominant over subject, student and personal professional values. Gleeson et al. (2005) had previously questioned the dualism of the literature which conceptualised managers as leaders with agency operating creatively, compared to managers as market and policy agents and this suggests a move in leaders' positions. This second decade of incorporation is described, during an ongoing period of reform in the FE sector, as one of 'uneasy transitions from "old" to "new" public management' (Gleeson and Knights, 2008, p.50). Yet these authors then go on to consider ways in which this dualism is challenged, which suggests an incomplete transition for both middle and senior managers' positions.

The broader contested question for both middle and senior managers is of how far FE leadership and management CPD roles can be harmonised, within a range of professional values and influences. Some studies develop the earlier idea that shared values encourage a greater sense of ethical approaches. This may involve the development of trust between staff and leaders, which may be needed for sustainability of FE leadership in the longer term (Elliott, 2013; Jameson, 2012; Lambert, 2012). Jameson (2006-2007)) in her earlier CEL survey had noted at that point that the concept and principle of shared leadership within colleges was welcomed but audit and management cultures did not encourage trust. Also, that the concept and practice of collaborative leadership had become to be regarded by leaders and managers as somewhat idealistic. This is another potential gap between structure, agency and practice for further investigation via individual leaders. Yet it is not surprising if the pressures of competition, commercial confidentiality and resource issues limit the opportunity for collaborative CPD.

### **Concepts of identity, accountability and agency and their relationship to professionalism and managerialism within CPD in FE**

Although the concepts of identity, accountability, agency, professionalism and managerialism in the literature, are contested in terms of their definition and boundaries, they are considered in relation to each other in this thesis. In the theoretical literature, these overview concepts provided a base from which to consider their influence in combination

in a range of different college contexts, and to which individual leader experience and policy contribute.

The concepts of identity, accountability and agency are prominent influencing factors in the literature on FE CPD leadership, but are very widely interpreted and applied in a variety of ways in particular educational contexts. Firstly, in this section the relationship between these concepts in the literature is evaluated for scope and focus; this is not just in relation to leadership and management generally in FE but their relevance to that of FE CPD post incorporation. Then each of these concepts is considered further separately before moving onto the issues of professionalism and managerialism.

Some studies such as those of Hammersley-Fletcher and Qualter (2010) offer an overview organisational framework of the relationship between key concepts of agency, structural policy accountability and identity, as well as professionalism and managerialism in educational sectors. In theoretical terms there is some concern about a risk of polarising the influences of agency and structure in education, but juggling and integrating pressures and influences is more about their interrelationship.

In view of the influence on each other of staffing, funding and college leadership approaches, the interpretation of sector policy can directly impact on areas such as appraisal, and at different levels of the college structure. As observed by Glatter (2014) there is intersection of leadership approaches with agency and identity. Along with the effect of policy interpretation and the leader's own experience, conceptual complexity of leadership is created.

In terms of distributed leadership in FE, Lumby suggests links can be across several of these associated concepts. She does however suggest that distribution may be more rhetoric and utopian in a context of strong managerial accountability. Therefore, that a sense of agency and autonomy 'is offered with a leading rein' which may well limit the spaces for applying all these linked leadership concepts to CPD, especially for the middle leader and manager (Lumby, 2013, p.588).

Some studies, which link professional agency with policy change are seen primarily from a perspective of teaching and lecturing staff, rather than from that of leaders (Hammersley-Fletcher and Qualter, 2010; Harrison et al., 2003; Shain and Gleeson, 1999). These studies do provide some comparative background to the experience of FE leaders, but my primary concern lies in identifying how the CPD needs of the teams are responded to by a leader.

The implications for CPD of managing regulatory curriculum practices within organisational structures, can reduce leaders' personal professional agency but the extent to which this occurs may be moderated by the context of individuals. Leadership of CPD, even within dominant managerial employer accountability structures, may still allow some personal performative agency.

Quality, market reputation and student retention accountabilities, also monitored via student satisfaction surveys, became increasingly important issues for business orientated organisational viability and development reasons. This applied both to corporate colleges organisationally and to individual leadership options, and management control structures, as professional development quality drivers (Simkins and Lumby, 2002).

### *Identities*

The focus on professional identities in the literature is seen in conceptual terms as a means towards the production of an appropriate model of professional practice. However, Robson (1998) and others have argued that FE professional cultures and identity were vulnerable in co-existence and provided potential for tension given their diversity and plurality. Identity conceptualisation is complicated by FE practitioners, many of whom have been regarded as having dual vocational and academic professional identities, but the issue of which is dominant is contested. It is also complicated in this diverse sector by factors such as FE staff, being required for reasons of market demand to work in colleges outside their original fields of expertise (Cartwright, 2013; Orr and Simmons, 2010; Gleeson and James, 2007).

Whilst some literature highlights lecturers' perceptions of clashes between traditional educational values and identities and those of management, it rarely deals with the specific focus of the ways in which individual leaders lead professional development across different disciplines, within their often multi-disciplinary departmental or organisational responsibilities. For example, Harrison et al. (2003) did not differentiate between the CPD needs of subject/unit and those of cross-organisational orientated business skills. For a wider view of CPD, Elliott (2011, p.138) emphasises the need to focus on the 'plurality of identities' between sites including disciplines and departments (micro-analysis), institutions (mesa-analysis) and government and quangos (macro-analysis).

However, there are some examples of unit identity analyses which cross these categories. In adult education units within colleges, with a high level of specialist part-time staff, there is an issue of the relationship between individual personal identities and group identities, related to the expected cultures and practices in their occupational contexts. Felstead et al. (2009) demonstrate the variable extent to which collective group identities are subsumed or dominate those of the individual.

Whilst identities in UK FE are not shown to be necessarily fixed, they may be dependent on histories of individuals as well as group identities and can be aligned to place (Brown and Humphreys, 2006). This is particularly evident when college mergers create new identities alongside historical ones. Whilst identities can be built from research involving reflective self-narratives, Sachs (2001), from a comparable Australian context, conceptualises professional identity as operating within a democratic or managerial discourse, challenging the degree to which individuals can be in control of their own identity

construction. This contrasts with the idea of the risk to FE staff ownership of a sense of professionalism, if policy ‘imposes’ a definition on the profession via policy direction and national CPD structures.

Whilst English (2008) draws on theoretical concepts of leadership and management theory which suggests the interrelated dimension between national and individual policy, Lumby and English (2009) in the context of FE in England, argue for resistance to imposed policy identity by consideration of the way to open up CPD to a wider notion. For example, by relating roles respectively to management relative structural formality, compared to visionary, situational and more informal leadership. They also distinguish between management based on legal authority of organisational managers, and leadership based on moral authority in terms of professionalism, to focus on broader staff development than a single notion of strategic organisational policy.

Lucas and Unwin (2009), with a focus on workplace identities and the effect on professional development for trainees, draws on Fuller and Unwin’s (2004) expansive/restrictive framework, which argued that leaders and managers in colleges could encourage or restrain professional learning, by the form and extent of the support provided. The implications for leaders’ support for CPD, may be influenced by other priorities, pressurised workloads and issues of accessibility of opportunities for staff. These studies offer findings from a survey plus interviews and learning logs, which provide evidence of a lack of overall strategy and coherence rather than integration between elements of CPD practice and its support within colleges.

### ***Accountabilities***

Forms of accountability relationships are closely linked to the implications for agency, identity demonstration, performance, standards and professional autonomy. Whilst accountability has been conceptualised as a form of professional control, agency in professions is bounded by a range of accountabilities, which may be to students, to personal commitments and values, as well as to professional standards, funders and hierarchical managerial layers in the college structure. Møller (2009, pp.39-40) argues that accountability is a ‘multi-layered concept’ and that there may be five accountability forms, ranging from the public, political and managerial to the personal and professional. Møller’s model is a theoretical international perspective and he argues that all of the forms apply in different ways to individual educational leaders, within different national, local and personal applications of policy contexts. This creates subtle and competing internal and external accountabilities for CPD priorities. Each form of accountability raises both ‘shortcomings and advantages’ for leaders in terms of tensions and/or scope for supporting CPD and involves both internal and external accountabilities. For example, whilst external accountabilities to policy may focus on the level of achievement of student learning outcomes, this may not be compatible with leaders view of students’ individual

circumstances or aspirations. Whilst there are no absolutes for leadership priorities within different forms of accountability, the question for CPD leadership is how far leaders in FE can achieve a balance of accountability influences to maintain trust in their leadership, whilst supporting the needs and longer-term sustainability of individuals and the organisation (Lambert, 2011).

The relationship between accountability and standards in schools has been researched in the context of curriculum and learning outcomes for school improvement, with intervention sanctions for low performers (Ladd and Zelli, 2002). The accountability mechanisms in schools revolve around curriculum delivery options and their effect on learning outcomes, although there is a debate about the extent of a direct causal link in view of the potential variables. In UK FE colleges there are similar issues, but in terms of CPD the concern is around the identification of issues which staff development support *can* influence, whilst recognising the consequences of inspection regime reports. These reports can have influential marketing and reputational effects. Failure to achieve growth targets has a direct effect on funding and college viability under incorporation. Thus organisational, staff and leaders' accountabilities are closely linked. The most common effect of failing to meet funding targets in the FE quasi-business environment is amalgamation and restructuring.

In terms of both policy and practice some of the literature has promoted the concept of 'intelligent accountability' to suggest potential mediation and greater scope for leader agency (Cowie et al., 2007). Although writing within the Scottish context, where the chartered teacher status of the profession allows for decentralised greater control and accountability to its members, Cowie accepts that teachers and leaders are subject to targets and legal standards. However, the idea of intelligent accountability assumes rational demonstrable links between standards and outcomes with incentives and sanctions involved. It assumes standardisation, yet Ellison (2012), from a U.S. community college perspective, counters this by advocating a form of intelligent accountability which decentralises responsibility, and to some extent this occurred in FE CPD in the 1990s and again after 2012. This allowed potential for FE to develop alternative strategies, based on trust and shared responsibility, to achieve standards and enhance opportunities for internal accountability. However, in FE in England policy and professional standards have been historically variable and proved difficult to apply to a diverse sector except in a broad generic pedagogic way (Lucas, 2004).

For FE CPD in England, over the period from early 1990s to the next century, the sector as a whole moved from regional centralisation to de-centralisation, back to centralised accountability, and forward to a degree of de-centralisation. In the later periods of incorporation there has been a greater emphasis on the benefits of collaboration within larger organisational units, but the colleges have retained accountabilities for business viability and the effects of funding pressures. This requires a leadership balancing act

between the longer term strategic individual staff professional capacities, and developing support mechanisms and CPD for shorter term national targets and college organisational survival (Mackay and Wakeling, 2014; Elliott, 2013).

In FE literature the concept of accountability has been seen within the context of an increase in audit mechanisms including external inspection. It has been related to organisational resource requirements such as strategic and funding returns, as well as to the effect on the limit to personal professional accountability and self-agency (Bradley et al. 2010; Holloway, 1999). Bradley et al. who conducted a large-scale survey based on FE levels of efficiency in production terms, suggested that student characteristic variables were more important than staff related variables. Nevertheless Iszatt-White et al. (2011, p.93) focused on the role of leadership as performance which can be seen as ‘gambits of compliance’ rather than a direct intention to recognise efficiency as an underlying professional value. Lumby and English (2009) raise the issue of how leaders present their performance, as a leader, in ‘performing’ to the team they lead. Both studies offer insights into the way in which leaders may justify and account for their support and development of staff, yet implement policy structural requirements alongside. This raises the question though of how far CPD leadership can balance satisfactorily both individual and organisational accountability.

### ***Agency***

Agency can be variously defined, in combination with other concepts, as the capacity to act independently, or make a difference, or to allow for choice as a change agent (Caldwell, 2013; Swaffield and MacBeath, 2013). In educational contexts agency has been associated with complex concepts of the self, which can be expressed unconsciously or consciously, via rituals and myths, and linked to individual and group identities and values (Caldwell, 2013; Lumby and English, 2013; Gleeson et al., 2005). This association with ideas of multiple and changing leadership identities suggest both very individual and differential group identities, but also the potential to use agency to differentiate leaders’ action at different levels of involvement in CPD processes and action.

The relationship between the agentic CPD implications of quality assurance, the challenges of supporting part-time staff - whose employment contractually may lie with an outside employment agency - and the integration of individual and team CPD with centrally college organised CPD, is under-researched.

One way in which professionalism has been linked to agency, is in approaches to appraisal. It can be seen either as a formative means to share professional values and practice within a culture of trust, or to use lesson practices such as observation and appraisal opportunities as a means of accountability for standards. The potential issue for leaders’ agency in differentiating between these two purposes in terms of professionalisation and agency, has



been noted by O’Leary (2013). Without relying solely on the regulatory practice of grading inspection quality criteria, opportunities for dialogue *and* development are not necessarily mutually exclusive. However, more work needs to be undertaken to evaluate the extent, and the way in which such practises are integrated into CPD. However, at senior and middle management places in FE structures, it has been argued that there is scope for some strategic agency either at an organisational level or unit level. In both cases, this can offer opportunities for CPD which go beyond leaders acting as intermediary change agents (Caldwell, 2013) and this is a question for exploration in this thesis.

The key concepts discussed have a dynamic relationship, and do not operate independently of their relationship to other structural, policy and organisational factors, as suggested in relation to studies of learner agentic orientations in adult education (Biesta and Tedder, 2007). Individual agency for CPD leadership can be grounded in a combination of personal experience as well as structural and contextual influences. This ecological approach to agency conceptualises it, not as an individual characteristic or attribute, but as being achieved within a context over time and suggests co-existence of a range of influences. The distinction between state regulation and individual organisational agency is often baldly represented in contextual background in the literature, as in the 1992 FHE Act representing the grant of legal ‘independence’ to FE colleges. Organisational agency may be qualified by the structural limitations of external accountability for colleges, and by those internal restrictions on historical capacity and potential once a college is corporate.

### ***Professionalism***

The basis of comparisons in the literature between concepts of managerialism and professionalism in FE is often seen as them being in direct conflict. There is also literature on the subtle relationships between these concepts, and what researchers believed *should* be the basis of FE professionalism, or a different form of re-professionalisation, or de-professionalisation (Plowright and Barr, 2012; Bathmaker, 2005). However, the wide scope of concepts of professionalism, its relationship to managerialism and the effect on CPD thinking and leadership, is complicated by the diversity of pedagogic, academic, vocational and previous occupational, professional experience of staff within general FE colleges. A weakness of some of the literature on professionalism in FE is the lack of identification of the influence of different balances of a leader’s professional experience from previous and current contexts.

After the period of the early sector contractual disputes of the 1990s, studies relating to college leadership tended to still focus on critiques of managerialism linked to its immediate effects in comparison to lecturers’ educationally based professional agency (Harrison et al., 2003; Shain and Gleeson, 1999; Withers, 1998a; Ainley and Bailey, 1997; Levačić and Glatter, 1997; Randle and Brady, 1997; Elliott and Hall, 1994).

Whilst notions of pedagogic professionalism are a policy focus in the literature for initial professional training and development, CPD also often has a direct focus on the impact of skills learning outcomes for students and trainees and associated pedagogical development of staff, especially for those new to the sector. Early research in this area, such as that of contributors to Robson (1996), had as its main focus structured and hierarchical, centralised and formal development processes rather than wider and more informal opportunities to enable leaders to support CPD. Whilst there has been a general recognition of the diverse needs of the sector there were also assumptions that the policy change agenda was sector-wide and the dominant influence.

With a limited empirical data base on leaders of FE CPD specifically, later work does consider the theme through ongoing development after initial teacher training. The focus on professional values, and potential learning outcomes was given more emphasis than that directly on leadership and management (Jameson and Hillier, 2008; Orr, 2008). Orr draws attention to the idea of shared values potentially being overstated but argues that managers' own interests dominate. From the perspective of leaders and managers this claim offers an opportunity in this thesis to consider leaders' individual evidence, given the variable environments across general FE colleges.

The diverse characteristics of different professional values within FE colleges can be compared to older professions, such as social work, law and medicine, where it is argued there is greater commonality of view (Rouse, 2004). Examples of CPD from the field of social work argue that behind skills and competency must lie values and the concept of 'being' rather than just 'knowing' if complex and uncertain professional contexts are to be responded to (Brown et al., 2007). In an attempt to delineate FE professionalism from other professions, some work emphasised primarily the pedagogic value and practice orientation of lecturers in FE for an 'ideal' prescription to boundary this theme (Plowright and Barr, 2012; Robson and Bailey, 2009; Gleeson et al. 2005). The effect of the diversity of view of teaching staff within colleges is offered more emphasis than that of the leader of CPD.

Whilst both professionalism and managerialism form underlying themes in the literature there are widely different conceptions of what this means for FE and CPD, given its staff diversity. For this thesis, there is also a question of the extent to which different values dominate thinking of individual leaders and those of contributors to policy. Yet notions of professionalism in FE, suggesting shared group moral values and educational pedagogic concerns and/or vocational occupational professional values, are frequently cited in both FE policy reports as if they are held in common. The multiple and changing perspectives of professionalism and associated identities, their nature, performance and links to other key concepts such as agency, have now raised their profile in more recent literature, and reflect some staffing diversity in terms of CPD activity (Broad, 2016; Harper and Jephcote, 2010).

Whilst the literature overall offers fewer differentiated understandings of professionalism in relation to CPD leaders' approaches, beyond a frequent distinction between academic and vocational notions of professionalism, there are some studies which relate the concept to the distinctive adult, community and basic skills areas and in terms of part-time staff (Swan and Swain, 2010; Jameson and Hillier, 2008). Although much of the rest of the literature makes some cross organisational assumptions about shared values, certainly within the area of pedagogic values and skills, the range and diversity of potential professional characteristics, implied and explicit in FE, show professionalism to be an elusive and difficult to define concept (Jameson, 2012; Gleeson and James, 2007). It is to be expected that this diversity is likely to lead to complex overlapping, contrasting, and wide-ranging understandings of professionalism and the professional criteria for development. This raises the question of how far the sector can have a shared professional value base or an overall status across different subject, occupational or disciplinary expertise positions. Such a position would need to take account of perceived differentiation by college units and sector divisions to help to understand how and why CPD is led and supported by individual leaders and managers.

Although the sector has moved into, then out of, a period of compulsory CPD recording by college lecturers, there is still not a common definition of how CPD practices apply the notion of professionalism across FE in a similar way to other professions (Jameson, 2012; Friedman and Phillips, 2004). Some studies on professionalism respectively have a greater concern with personal individual development; public quality assurance; organisational staff capacity or ethical and moral values. Others make a distinction between college staff pedagogic issues and specific occupationally-based vocational identities (Lester, 2014; Robson et al., 2004).

The theme of professional identity across educational studies has been argued ideologically on the basis of an integrated common core ethical and value base for professional development, rather than one based on common identity, either vocational or educational (Crowley, 2014; Hillier, 2012; Elliott, 1998). However, this position may be difficult to square in a sector with different views about the role, and priority of different professionals, for example between adult or academic and vocational professional orientations (Spenceley, 2006; Robson 1998). It also raises the idea of a 'paradox', between professional structural accountability and potential for individual agency, suggested by Gleeson and James (2007) and the role of mediation of policy understandings by managers. The implications for CPD in the unstable FE environment suggest scope for a range of CPD opportunities, rather than any fixed notion of what professionals' development should comprise.

However, some argue for CPD based on transferable skill development across disciplines and sub-sectors, both for students and staff. For example, Lucas (2012) draws attention to a need to define skills in terms of thinking, imagining, visualising, using experience and

working within communities of practice. This can be linked to a profession defined in terms of theoretical knowledge, technical expertise and a moral sense, when all are applied to the 'what' and 'how' of pedagogic professional development for teaching (Carr, 2003, p.40).

### ***Managerialism***

The major themes associated with managerialism and new public management in FE in the literature - including those highlighted by Smithers and Robinson (2000); Gleeson and Shain (1999a; 1999b); Randle and Brady (1997) and Avis et al.(1996) - involve notions of a controlling right to manage with an intention to achieve business related economic productivity; rational functional strategy and planning via the use of technological and organisational measurement and accountability and a disciplined but flexible labour force. Closely allied to these elements are themes of strict financial and resource control, consumerism and quality evaluation and all had a direct influence on colleges corporate practice. Avis (1996), who draws on Pollitt's work on the public sector and these understandings of managerialism, applies this to the post-compulsory sector. The five main themes used to define managerialism of enhanced productivity, technology, a disciplined labour force, management of planning and measurement of impact are based on this underlying notion of the right to manage. The impact of this on incorporated colleges created a climate which discouraged individual CPD and the exercise of individual professional judgement based on traditional public service values, at the expense of organisational business needs. Managerialism has been associated with an encouragement of the development of a human resource management function primarily concerned more with business quality processes, performability and surveillance than concepts of empowerment and ownership (Randle and Brady, 1997). Avis et al. (1996) concluded that in the 1990s owing to the political kudos of policy encouraging increased participation in FE and its political expediency, the short-termism of targets supported managerial practice in implementing policy in colleges which inhibited the exercise of professional judgement.

Managerialist practices can support an expectation of compliance with managerial control which Gleeson and Shain (1999a) nuanced as compliance by leaders and managers either willingly, unwillingly or as strategic compliers, although at the point of that research the senior managers were more likely to favour managerialist tendencies, and those of lecturers a more professional orientation. The wider policy impact was seen by Gleeson and Shain (1999b) to encourage in colleges a confrontational and entrepreneurial market-led change in management, although FE in turn was restricted by centralised public funding bodies.

Managerialism in this thesis has been linked in Chapter 1 and this chapter to a variety of themes which demonstrate the relevance of the concept to the history and practice of corporate colleges, the changing roles of leaders and in particular those who feel they became both re-labelled as managers with increased resource accountability functions, including that in relation to staff and CPD. Although attitudes towards managerialism are

expected to vary in terms of its dominance, acceptance and integration into leadership and management practice, this may be based on previous professional experience, understandings of external policy and the extent to which professional agentic opportunity is seen to be available to them. Thus, a more nuanced view of managerialism may be uncovered via individual narratives.

In the literature the concept of managerialism has been discussed in relation to staff contracts, agency and accountability. For those researching in the 1990s, particularly around the peak in 1996 of contractual disputes and business corporate management contexts, the literature homed in on concepts of managerialism, implying or explicitly linking it to the idea of oppositional values to those of mainstream professional staff. However, whilst there was not a commonality of view of managerialism amongst leaders, it could be related to their own experience or their college context. Withers (1998; 1999) reflected on a *range* of predominant values across a sample of senior managers; other studies related managerialist views primarily to lecturing staff views (Shain and Gleeson, 1999; Randle and Brady, 1997). These different emphases are also reflected in the representations of CPD in FE policy documents and the studies of the effect of such policies. It is significant that the first decade of incorporation, with the major impact on contractual conditions and often limited funding, may have left little room or resources for concentration on CPD which went beyond HR capacity needs, for strategically directed skills and organisational survival. Post-1997, it was suggested that there was a wide variation of values and perceptions of managerialism based on individual ‘background, philosophy and temperament’ amongst principals, some of whom reverted to a closer curriculum and educational professional focus (Withers, 1998, p.53).

Managerialism in the context of college incorporation and the wider relationship to what Avis et al. (1996, p.ix)) refer to as the different versions of the ‘New Right’, is also considered more widely in relation to education, society, knowledge and nationhood and as part of a wider policy of economic modernization. Ball (1998, p.123) saw ‘new managerialism’ as ‘both a delivery system and a vehicle for change’, replacing bureaucracy with the market and corporate culture with self-regulation with increased control via appraisal. Shattock (2000, p.89) in his inquiry of governance and management in colleges saw managerialism as a means to improve college efficiency, which had in some cases replaced ‘a service philosophy with one akin to entrepreneurialism’. In citing examples of college mis-management and malpractice, involving an excess and abuse of market competitive governance, inappropriate leadership and control was considered to have been exercised. However, Smithers and Robinson (2000) argued that the financial constraints, market and centralising standards agendas and the FEFC funding strategy of incorporation led almost inevitably to a culture of managerial accountability. Simkins (2000) argued that corporate, organisational views, especially of senior managers concerned with issues of

college survival, distanced them from other staff and other values. He recognises greater variation in the FE sector and its policy context than that of schools and greater resource pressure, but also that the pre-incorporation period saw cultural and market pressures already emerging and a mix of divergent professional dominant values. Lumby (2000) represents this divergency of beliefs and practices in FE, some of which are presented as managerialist, as actively 'promoting traditional values more effectively', suggesting a more integrative model of leadership, management and values than may have been the case immediately after incorporation. Lumby and Tomlinson (2000) go on to challenge the polarisation of managerialism and traditional professional values and suggest the effect is of a balance of influences and values. The individual professional experiential influences of leaders and their contexts on their CPD decisions are investigated in this thesis for potential effect on the co-existence of different values and practices.

The complex relationship between managerialism and professionalism, given diverse underlying values and experience of individuals and the mediating process involved in achieving business outcomes, is also linked to professional identities and the extent of organisational and individual autonomy in a corporate college (Shain and Gleeson, 1999). Historically the impact of managerialism in the FE and Skills sector as a whole differed in intensity in the light of different sectional histories, culture and values. For example, in some adult and community sites and in some vocational areas in colleges Coffield et al. (2008) found less managerialist tension and greater commonality of values and views, with mutual support as a response to ongoing change. In these respects, the historical trajectory of incorporation suggests an element of an evolutionary move from de-professionalism to re-professionalism, especially in view of significant college staff turnover levels over the first two decades of incorporation and ongoing structural change.

In practice, the growing climate of collegial and partnership developments forms a parallel conceptual approach to evaluating college and CPD practice and managerialism but is partially developed from ideas of distributed leadership and collegial management. Lumby (2003) argues that systemic leadership goes beyond the short-term to focus on vision and cultural development and should prioritise internal factors to encourage distributed and delegated leadership, through an indivisible approach to administration, management and leadership activity. She acknowledges that the context in which leaders work, including curriculum, college size and the nature of students and college circumstances may affect the extent of potential leadership agency to create opportunities, but argues that distribution can also be a compelling means to develop long-term sustainable change. (1998) conceded that collegial management, particularly in schools, based on consensus, might be conceived as an ideal, and may be relevant to colleges particularly at a departmental unit level, but can be difficult to sustain within a centralised accountable funding system associated with managerialism. Both these concepts have relevance to the FE sector, college leadership

styles and management practices and have implications for processes of decision making. Whilst managerialism was at its height in the mid-1990s and has been presented as a ‘gulf’ between staff and managers’ values, the distinctions between values may well have become less precise, especially for newer managers within the sector (Lumby and Tomlinson, 2000).

For CPD leadership and management the unit or cross-college contextual circumstances are likely to strongly influence both potential and practice, along with the ability of individual leaders to exercise agency in affecting opportunities within the wider climate under which FE sector and colleges operate. The influences of both managerialism and professionalism form an important underlying theme for further investigation in this thesis in terms of values and their prioritisation and a change to a more management role for those who perceived themselves as ‘leaders’. In particular, the influence of managerialism has been seen by some as imposing a management role on those who might see themselves primarily as leaders. Management may have been more reluctantly undertaken after incorporation (Gleeson and Knights, 2008). Some leaders embraced the business ethos and management practices more enthusiastically than others (Gleeson and Shain, 1999). The question for this thesis therefore revolves around not just the extent of the impact of managerialism on CPD but the underlying perceptions of its influence on CPD leadership, which are evaluated further in chapters 5 and 6.

### **Summary of implications from the literature for college leadership and management of CPD in colleges**

The landscape of professional development has been widely constructed in the historic literature, in the context of pre- and post-compulsory educational leadership. Elements of educational policy agendas, markets, historical forces, concepts of self and organisational agency, different accountabilities and interpretations of professionalism, managerialism and identity are all influential in the mix of determining the form of CPD leadership practices.

The complexity of the implications of corporate policy for staff development and FE CPD involves personal and individual career development, subject development, teaching development and Government workforce development policy prioritisation. Coffield (2008) found different views existing amongst vocational and academic staff and those who teach at different qualification levels under different contracts. The practice of leadership and management of CPD may be integrated with issues of staff morale, turnover and staffing capacity planning.

The link between regulatory accountability and performativity in FE can extend from a context of an entrepreneurial to a resistant self, which relates to the earlier concept of managerial compliance (Lumby and English, 2013; Shain and Gleeson, 1999). Individual leaders may encompass such a range in FE, both within and across their multiple identities

as a professional, a leader, a trainee and a member of an occupational group (Ball, 2007). Avis (2009) argues that the gap between policy and practice of CPD, and the emphasis on performativity and targets, limit changes in practice as a direct result of policy, but the extent of the limitation needs further evaluation.

The FE studies which were produced based on evidence which was close to the immediate effects of changed corporate staffing responsibilities and alongside corporate staffing restructuring, changed cultures perceptions and leadership practice within colleges. Therefore, the later literature is seen in the context of different historical FE structures, policy and legislation of the evolving sector. Following the experience of structural changes, studies such as those by Withers (1998); Randle and Brady (1997); Ainley and Bailey (1997) and Elliott (1996), now need further development in the context of historical longer-term reflections of individual leaders via their own professional life histories.

Historical documentary studies offer some insights over time into responses to change in terms of policy, culture, values and assumed practice and these implications are discussed more fully in chapter 4. The strength of the earlier evidence in the CPD literature lies within its contemporary context, when pre-incorporated expectations and roles in the area of professional development were closer to the surface of CPD thinking.

Whilst the literature acknowledges that the 1992 corporate legislation allowed colleges corporate legal agency to determine their strategy, at the same time it did not always recognise the impact of an increase in specific accountability requirements, compared to pre-incorporation. The strategic planning process included little reference to staffing and staff development beyond its relevance as part of a business case and college financial ability and capacity to deliver the plan. The effect of this is a need to investigate further what formal and informal approaches to leading CPD exist in practice. During the later period of incorporation, the research literature begins to focus on professional development as its relevance to the sector moved up both the legislative and policy agenda. As staff contractual and CPD policy changes became more integrated into corporate college staffing and HR policy, the contextual and professional agendas rose (Silver, 2012). The effect of the higher profile of staffing and professional development, alongside continuing accountability for targets, led to a focus in the literature on leadership of student learning outcomes to a greater extent, and a more sophisticated if diverse value-based interpretation of a leading professional. Studies on FE such as that by Crowley (2014) and Harkin (2005) placed their emphasis more on CPD effectiveness, the student learner and the formal skill development processes, rather than much directly on the leadership of professional development. The weakness of this, as in the school's literature, lies in the limits to the direct causal relationship between staff CPD and student learning outcomes.

Against studies from a business management view, there were investigations which emphasised the learner lived-experiences, the pedagogical and learner implications and



related learning outcomes of incorporation (Lumby et al., 2005; Avis and Bathmaker, 2004). Such studies saw CPD outcomes for staff alongside the student learning ones but did not focus on individual staff development. The literature rarely deals with the specific focus of the ways in which individual leaders choose how to lead professional development, nor how its leadership is perceived to have been practised in different units within colleges.

Whilst in the early post-incorporated period there was considerable emphasis in the literature on the general effects of the business focus within incorporation, this quickly led to studies revolving around ideas of compliance and managerialism. Accountable funding changes, corporate human resources and staffing responsibilities along with significant contractual disputes, were the main focus of a series of studies largely presented as representative of the sector as a whole (Briggs, 2005; Gleeson and Shain, 1999; Randle and Brady, 1997).

Other studies include Floyd's (2009) study of higher education leaders. He was concerned with questions of managers' career motivation and used professional narrative life-history methods to highlight its influence on CPD. This career development factor impinges on individual motivations for professional development, the leader's values for their team leadership, and identity studies. In practice, alongside organisational capacity factors leaders must balance individual development.

As suggested earlier, much of this literature applies concepts separately to FE but identity, agency and accountability interact and affect each other. In combination they can offer potential to see ways in which occupational, professional and personal values may be identified as having, between them, an influence on professional leadership roles; hence the need in this research to look across both policy and individual leaders.

Whilst this literature review is spread widely within and across a range of disciplinary and methodological boundaries, much of the literature tends to be seen through the limits of different disciplinary lens and rarely within the full historical context. This situation compounds the complexity of the multidisciplinary link between business and educational studies. Both of these broad disciplines can be seen to comprise a 'a loose amalgam' of interdisciplinary approaches; in the case of FE particularly in view of the mix of disciplinary influences (Humes and Bryce, 2003, p.176). Thus, the literature in relation to the wide range of influences on CPD FE leadership offers a range of insights but from different and potentially permeable viewpoints.

Professional assumptions about CPD and its leadership can be derived from the development of skills-based approaches, directly related to official documents, and from the professional life history reflections of individual leaders and their influence on CPD practice. However, the ways in which policy is interpreted may vary subjectively in particular contexts of individual leaders, and their circumstances within their college. This

suggests a justification, developed in the next chapter, for a methodology involving life history along with policy documentary approaches, to consider the subtle permutations and interrelationship of a range of influences on CPD leadership in FE colleges.

The influence of historical and cultural CPD practices arising from different contexts, within colleges, affect both formal and informal CPD practice. There are also elements of performative leadership involved where particular histories and college contexts, myth and associated rituals are integrated into the ways in which business approaches are involved (Lumby and English, 2013; Avis, 2009). However, the ways in which individual leaders integrate these influences is less widely researched.

For example, some literature on post-incorporated colleges concentrated on colleges offering primarily 16-19-year old provision, rather than on general FE colleges of which this may be just a part (Stoten, 2011b). Such provision was either subsumed at incorporation or subsequently into general FE colleges or remained separate. Historically and culturally it aligns more closely to school teacher CPD and its pre-incorporation CPD arrangements. The leadership of CPD across general colleges involved differing degrees of separation or integration, between 16-19-year olds concerns and those of adults, as considered appropriate to the roles, perceived staff needs and historic cultures.

Very few FE studies make any detailed comparison between FE college units beyond overview common leadership themes, such as that of Briggs (2003) on generic role modelling, but some research on FE CPD can offer useful insights into formal or informal forms. Categorisation of CPD activity into these forms may be determined either on the part of the researcher or may start from the point of leader self-definition of what constitutes CPD. Broad (2016) in researching professional knowledge transfer, uses an additional 'other' CPD updating category which is not defined further but could encompass further informal updating, via informal staff communication. In her study of FE vocational staff occupational updating Broad spans multiple CPD activities involving explicit and tacit knowledge network transfer. The issue of part-time staff access to some of these opportunities is also raised briefly as one for further investigation.

Some studies in other educational sectors, such as that by Hammersley-Fletcher and Strain (2011) on the primary sector, do align to the educational policy discourse and its change implications, and are based on the influence of lived experience professional leadership and staff values. Along with concepts of agency, they show how these interact internally on the organisation. However, the nature of primary education and their national curriculum lends a narrower perspective than that of the more diverse contexts of FE.

As identified in chapter 1, the FE corporate sector can be seen as a quasi-market 'hybrid' of private/private organisations (Lumby and Simkins, 2002). However dominant respective influences are expected to be seen differentially within colleges, where a wide range of

histories and cultures may apply. This diverse complexity of contextualisation has particular significance for research seeking understandings of CPD by individual leaders and staff within the sector. There is further developmental potential to investigate commonalities, contrasts, and intersections between individual experiences and wider understandings of leading CPD.

In the FE literature, two aspects of the CPD scope particularly revolve around cross-organisational instrumental briefing and training and individual and subject-team CPD. The first is concerned directly with corporate business needs and the latter is affected by approaches to appraisal and inspection regimes. Both have some implications for market accountability, in terms of reputation and organisational survival. Alongside this post-2012, is the influence of government policy which ceased to direct CPD recording centrally so the focus moved back to corporations taking more control of their own organisational approach to CPD.

The focus in Chapter 4 is on the underlying policy documentary influences on CPD and its associated literature. The literature range evaluated in Chapters 2 and 4, helped to clarify and develop the scope of my research questions and the significant gaps in coverage. The literature also informed approaches to methodology and specific methods, developed in Chapter 3, to elicit data most likely to offer further insights into CPD leadership and management within colleges.

Overall, the literature range serves to emphasise the unusually broad and diverse range of contexts for leadership typically found within general FE colleges in England. The literature does highlight some of the applicability of mainstream broader leadership and management theories and concepts to FE leaders, but now needs to be distinguished further by different units within and across colleges. The diversity of the sector overall in terms of resources, the variety of staff roles and its collective and individual educational and leadership histories, impact on the lack of a single FE professional or leadership ethos. Without specific leader and team contextualisation of CPD it is difficult to fully identify and understand the identities involved and their relationship to professional experience and the specific historic cultures within colleges.

The closer link between individual FE leaders and the policy emphases is apparent to some extent in later studies where researchers began to acknowledge the influence of individual leader experience (Iszatt-White et al., 2011). That study acknowledged the influence of formal and informal means of professional development but had a particular focus on the rational and situated nature of day-to-day leadership and management in further education.

The next chapter, chapter 3, is concerned with my justification for approaching the methodology for this research via a combination of data derived from individual professional lived history experience of leaders, and that from historical documentary data.

This approach aims to develop the literature to consider the extent to which policy influences can co-exist with the influences of personal professional experiences of leaders. In the context of school leaders' development, Lumby et al. (2008) acknowledged that whilst it is possible to measure some variables which relate to skills and certain behaviours, what was missing were the stories from the leaders themselves. If one considers 'success' of CPD leadership widely, beyond assumptions of specific outcome relationships in relation to any measurable targets, then the arts of leadership and experience which shape action and approaches are important to discern. As Grint (2000, p.4) noted 'There are so many potentially significant variables in establishing what counts as successful leadership'. The methodological approach discussed in the next chapter aims to justify an integrated approach to the research to identify a range of influences and their relationship.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

#### **Introduction and overview to the philosophical research approach, methodology and methods**

This first section of the chapter involves an introduction and overview to the philosophical, methodological and disciplinary approach to my research and covers the following aspects:

- From literature search to methodology;
- Values and ideologies;
- Narrative methodologies (including life history and historical documentary processes);
- Interdisciplinary methodological issues: towards a holistic understanding.

This is followed by the section on the research process overview, methods, techniques and analysis which includes:

- Research processes;
- Pilot study;
- Prompts and corporate policy themes;
- The sample: criteria, recruitment and selection.

The final sections of the chapter cover: ethics; research positionality and a summary of the research design rationale.

As Pallas (2001) observes the underlying range of epistemologies and a multitude of sub divisions of philosophical perspectives which educational researchers engage with, are complex in their diversity and application. Although views of knowledge may be classified in a complex and compartmentalised manner, this approach risks missing the scope of wider inter-connected influences. Ball (2007, p.110) argues that: ‘the epistemic assumptions of order, structure, function, cause and effect are variously mobilised to represent ‘the social’ and, in doing so, work to exclude many of the mobile, complex, ad hoc, messy and fleeting qualities of lived experience’. Those who attempt to categorise these paradigms or world-views of differentially perceived realities, make distinctions between positivist/normative views of realities, constructions and political factors, with a greater focus on a primarily interpretative view (Mack, 2010; Creswell, 2009; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2002).

The epistemological basis of my research is that of the idea of constructed knowledge whether by the individual or the political construction of policy. On the one hand, it is derived from public policy documentary sources, (recognised as not only the edited view of a named author for reports but the group construction of a policy narrative). On the other, it involves individual professional life history narratives which cast direct light on values affecting individual implementation intentions. The different forms of narrative involved had different purposes, but offer scope for understanding the intersection and links between declared intent and underlying values in each case.

Whilst the focus of each particular perspective is seen to have implications for not only overall methodologies and research design overall, but also specific methods and techniques for data, epistemological positions on knowledge and ontological understandings of views of 'reality' are mainly determined by the appropriateness of their connection to specific research questions. Overviews of particular epistemologies cite distinctive and often prescriptive characteristics - such as external objectivity with causal generalisability outcomes, typical of positivist approaches - or more subjective, individual smaller scale and negotiated meanings via an interpretive approach which is adopted in my study. The boundaries and variations within each paradigm and its sub-divisions can be seen as more permeable. For example, Fitzgerald (2007) argues that a methodological approach to documentary and life history can both be seen as forms within interpretative research. Constructions of narratives may arise from individual oral reflection or as the result of collective reflection as written documents. McSpadden McNeil and Coppella, (2006) see this as representing official and unofficial stories but they involve multiple methodologies to explore the relationship between policy and unique implementation by individuals. In one case the focus is on the historical policy context, on the other the historical development of an individual. One assumes outcomes, the other reflects more closely an individual voice and assumptions in interpretation. The rationale for my research design using both documentary policy and life history methods is that I am working between the two perspectives seeking to understand their relationship.

Overall, my intention was to identify an overall methodology and combination of methods across an interpretive approach. This was designed to offer insights into the way leaders interpreted, mediated, adapted and applied policy, in nuanced ways in the light of their own professional values and the policy contexts. This required an approach which combined historical documentary. and individual narrative data. In the majority of the FE studies, noted by Crowther (2014), Gleeson (2014), Iszatt-White (2011) and Lumby and Simkins (2002) for example, the relationship in empirical studies between national sector documentary foci, and those at the individual leader and manager college level, rarely explicitly recognised the nuances of different college unit influences, beyond some studies of post-16 provision such as that of Stoten (2011a) and Briggs (2007). As McCulloch (2004,

p.8) notes, there is considerable scope for what he terms ‘methodological pluralism’ in using life history approaches alongside documentary analysis, in seeking the ‘relationship between biography, history and social structures’. In this respect my approach allows an opportunity to show how the leaders see themselves in relation to their own history and experience, as well as the effect of assumptions and values as represented in historical policy. McCulloch echoes others who argue for the value of multi research approaches and the need to use all available evidence holistically, which fit the purpose, and to consider transferability rather than broad generalisation (Gorard and Taylor, 2004).

Whilst recognising the epistemological differences underlying forms of knowledge ‘realities’, Pring (2004) argues for a need to allow for construction *and* discovery of meaningful understandings and values, although this may involve different approaches to life history and documentary policy data. As Denzin and Lincoln (2011) suggest there is scope for synergy in terms of such a mix of approaches, given the complex range of and relationship between factors in the framework of different realities, which offer potential for better understanding of influences overall.

In these terms my research, using professional life history and documentary narratives, can offer a bottom-up and policy top-down approach to allow some sense of the intersection within the span of influences on CPD. Chamberlayne et al. (2004) suggests that this re-connects biography with wider policy and Goodson (2003) argues for a need to put life histories within the wider context of historical changes and the broader national policy narratives, if the former is not to remain stand-alone. Clandinin (2013, p.9) defines narrative inquiry as involving an ontology which is ‘both a methodology and a way of understanding experience narratively [producing] knowledge that was personal, practical, shaped by, and expressed in practice’. Professional life histories are therefore used in this research to link recorded documentary contemporary evidence with individual experience to delve further into the relationship between policy and CPD leadership in colleges.

This chapter now focuses on further justification for methodological choices and specific methods and techniques to support the interpretive framework for this research in relation to the underlying research questions, which relate to influences on leaders and managers in leading continuing professional education (CPD). The intent is to identify the myriad influences on the college leaders, in diverse college contexts, with different approaches to leading CPD post-compulsory education and training. Given a range of staff identities, and leaders’ capacity for agency and different accountabilities, the research approach aims to identify some understandings of what constitutes leading professional development in FE.

This introduction and overview to the chapter is structured around the relevance of the philosophical and epistemological framework outlined which underlies my methodological

approaches, and the choice of specific methods, in relation to the influence of values and ideologies underlying CPD leadership. Particular disciplines and methods associated with my chosen methodology are developed which offer a range of research insights, within historical, narrative and interdisciplinary parameters.

The methodological approach overall needed to help to identify key foci and inform the associated research questions:

- What do leaders and managers in FE colleges perceive CPD to comprise?
- What is the relationship between these leaders' and managers' individual experiential professional influences and those arising from professional educational and corporate business policy?
- What sense of individual agency and accountability is involved in the leadership and management of CPD in their diverse professional contexts?

Identification of the nuances of balancing co-existence and tensions of the influences on leadership and management of professional development, within and across different units in FE colleges, and externally, is also a dimension which runs across these questions. The approach to the design may highlight any patterns or diversity of policy and professional influences across college unit contexts and within colleges which comprise both educational and business value systems. This is where the professional life history data suggests more on individual internal views, but the policy documentation primarily external ones in terms of national overarching influence of corporate themes, as a product of a range of inputs to policy.

Given college unit histories and cultures, the methodology had to take account of college *and* sector diversity in determining an appropriate way to investigate perceptions of policy purpose, resourcing and leaders' roles within colleges, as well as the influence of individual professional experience and expectations of leaders and managers. The nature and variety of FE staff teams, even within the same unit of a college, involved demonstrating a wider range of factors than either that found in compulsory education or in higher education (Page, 2011; Blackmore, 2007).

In view of this diversity of the different units within general FE colleges and different roles of senior and middle managers in FE, the leaders' self-identities, understandings of accountabilities and notions of professionalism, also needed to be evaluated for variety. This is particularly the case since the academic/vocational divide and other staffing distinctions within FE, such as those between adult, basic education or special education, operate and are perceived in very different ways based on distinct histories and cultures.



Within this range the concern is still with identifying the interaction, intersection and interplay, between perceptions identified from within the documentary data from a national policy view, and from leaders' professional life histories.

As outlined in chapter 1, organisational staff capacity and development was a particular business concern for incorporated colleges from 1992 and there were new contractual and human resource responsibilities involved. My overall design focus involved an epistemological position and associated methodology which would encourage leaders' and managers' own constructions of views, reflections and perceptions of how approaches to CPD within the new business focused policy and funding environment was affected. The expectation was that professional values and needs of the teams led might be differentiated not only by policy, but also by structural and organisational criteria, as well as by individual staff professional experience. Professional development needed to be explored via an appropriate sample range of different college leaders during different periods. To consider the issues of the ways in which the pace of sector change, funding pressures and scope for agency could offer insights into the specific ways in which leaders approached CPD, it was important to seek detailed individual reflections of their professional experiences but alongside the overall policy considerations. In order to delineate and understand diversity of leadership it was necessary to take account of a range of contexts, different specialisms, experience and areas of learning provision and include those with cross college as well as subject departmental roles.

However, the methodological issues involving historical documentary approaches to research must take account of the nature of history and historiography. Whilst history does not predict the future it can offer 'an interface between past and present' [through an interdisciplinary] 'combination of documentary and non-documentary sources which provide different insights' (McCulloch, 2004, p.128-9). The issue of historical change over time, over the decades following incorporation from 1992, and the relative influences on this from contemporary policy and individual experience of change, involved considerations of an appropriate documentary sample. This is discussed further in this chapter in the section on the research process.

The assumptions behind historical policy documentation and those arising from narratives of lived experiences by individual leaders, needed to be analysed for the relationship between them, and compared for commonalities and contrasts arising from different forms of data. Key concepts with implications for the field of leadership and management, which cross both forms of data, include different notions of professionalism, managerialism, self and group identities, different lines of accountabilities and forms of agency. Whilst these concepts were expected to inform understandings of how leaders' roles developed during the post-incorporated period, the aspects they include needed to be differentiated by

individuals and considered in combination to look across the accounts. For example, the scope for self-agency was expected to be affected by the accountabilities associated with some funding methodologies and targets but could be variable in different college contexts over time.

### ***From literature search to methodology***

The process undertaken in the literature review involved an initial trawl of relevant search terms then consideration of relevant abstracts. The search related primarily to UK literature but a small number of international references were identified which potentially related to comparable CPD contexts in English FE colleges. Terminology used internationally was not necessarily consistent with that of UK FE, such as that of post-compulsory, tertiary, adult education and principals, so such literature was then scanned for relevance first for comparability to UK FE structures. In a few cases school-based literature was considered in view of the school/college provision overlap for provision for young people. International comparisons were limited to research either involving narrative professional life history methodologies and cases, given limited UK examples, or theoretical and methodological international perspectives of concepts such as accountability (Møller, 2009; 2013).

The initial search terms used covered further education in England, continuing professional development, and incorporated colleges since 1992. However, given the range of potential coverage and different terminology and labelling within the sector, terms were extended initially to include other educational sectors and professional development in FE colleges and their units. Categories included that of post-16 provision within both FE and learning and skills sectors, colleges of further education, adult and community education, lifelong learning, adult basic education and skills, training providers, post-compulsory education, tertiary colleges, and combinations of these. All of these terms involved terminology used within and about the sector during parts of the incorporated period.

The field of CPD in FE colleges, despite its structural sector identification in much policy material, is characterised by an unusually diverse range of sector-wide segments and activity, influencing both leadership and management across the sector and within its colleges. Although organisationally CPD has some common, human resources (HR) led CPD business foci, the sector also encompasses a wider history, culture and expectations, often of a curricular and subject based nature, which exist alongside. Business orientated CPD skills development has gained more attention than the more diverse, and especially informal, staff learning and development elements linked to subject expertise. The sector overall is layered not only by the type of FE organisation in which the leader operates, but by the very different units within general FE colleges. Each significant college unit area of

responsibility formed a separate search category given the range of provision and staff within general FE colleges.

The literature based on individual FE leaders and managers may be linked to their own professional background, but their responsibilities may involve one or several subject or discipline areas. The challenge of leading and managing CPD of staff with diverse professional backgrounds, in the context of sector policy influences, creates a complex framework of influences overall. Whilst the legal identity of colleges following incorporation is that of general, sixth-form or specialist colleges, there were also directly funded or franchised partners involved, for example of adult and community staff. The types of college unit were used to extend identification of specific literature to focus down on elements within colleges, since CPD leadership may involve different types, values, identities and distinctive contextual differences in history, perception, culture and professional understandings of staff. Leadership of FE CPD is not only an area which is less extensively researched but is highly variable in view of different historical, cultural and professional staff expectations in particular contexts.

The literature evaluation process involved a wide range of terms and approaches to this research topic which included considering what was termed leadership, support or management of FE staffing and professional development. As Lumby and English (2013, p.589) note, the changes in sector terminology reflected in colleges are 'remarkable' during this period hence the range considered. Whilst FE is viewed in different ways, emphasising different characteristics in different studies in terms of roles, terminology can be regarded as historic 'nuanced rebranding' of activity of colleges. Associated terms within leadership and management of CPD, such as educational professional, continuing and professional development, professional training, development and support as search terms, were used to identify literature which focused on different elements of the leadership and management of CPD to provide a background to potential interview prompts.

Consideration was given to the most useful way to deal with key CPD concept searches in the literature, especially in view of the way in which concepts were linked and/or contrasted in different combinations in empirical FE college studies. For these reasons this literature review was evaluated initially by concept, although recognising some categories such as professionalism and managerialism, crossed such boundaries.

Much of the UK literature either takes a sector overview stance and concentrates on commonalities, or is a single college case study. Sub-themes within such cases implied contextual complexity but also that the sector-wide themes had some influence on specific leadership and management options. Whilst some studies included use of semi-structured

case study approaches to an individual college, or involved cross sector survey work, there is less on specific comparisons in-depth of very different units within general FE colleges.

The literature ranged from models which focus on coaching, mentoring, a whole gamut of forms of formal and informal professional learning, work-place and work-based learning, skills-based development and individual professional learning and development of all types. However, in this thesis, the nature of the forms of professional learning to access or deliver development that the leader or manager has at their disposal, are not the main focus. Rather it is on their use, in different college unit contexts, and the reasoning for their use, based on the leader's experience and professional and contextual options.

Other ways in which the sector has been delineated in the literature have been suggested as segmentation by terms such as: 'second chance', post-school, FE purpose; community/continuing/lifelong/leisure adult learning; academic accredited courses; higher education degree level courses and vocational/occupational skill and knowledge provision (Silver, 2012). Within and beyond those categories, focus has often been on either vocational or academic leadership, specialist training or on higher education; all of these are evident within the sector but with very different emphases in terms of identities, CPD needs and histories. Yet the boundaries these structures imply are neither as distinct, nor typically representative within general FE colleges, of their staff body as a whole, or individual staff CPD needs necessarily, especially where leaders and staff may have roles across these segments of activity. In addition, staff contractual positions, professional experience, cultural expectations, identities and accountabilities affect the extent to which it is possible to identify a coherent and common sense of self-agency in terms of their CPD needs. However, the categories indicated above offered starting points in the literature, and informed an approach to sampling which considered some comparative college unit research alongside college wide factors.

The literature on FE and CPD, discussed in chapter 2 and the policy literature and impact of documentary sources in chapter 4, both offer insights into which, and how, particular foci may influence the ways in which leaders and managers approach CPD. Therefore, the theoretical and conceptual framework for methodological considerations was concerned with the scope for identifying any differentiation of the influences at college wide and unit levels, as well as by individual leaders' professional circumstances and contexts.

Within this methodological context of the most significant overview themes arising from the literature, this chapter also evaluates the mix of methods within the overall methodology that was planned. In order to identify data to inform understanding of the values and ideology of FE leaders, account had to be taken of the analytical and ethical issues involved. One of the underlying reasons for an interdisciplinary broad-based approach to the research

lay in the nature of the FE sector, given not only its historic diversity, but also its range of cultures and values.

My choice of methods was not mixed in the sense of mixing qualitative and quantitative methods but for the purpose of consideration of both documentary historical policy narratives and those of individual leaders' professional narratives. This mix of methods allowed for different interpretative approaches to be applied to data. The intent was to identify the most significant perceived themes in each case, in order to then evaluate the alignment of respective assumptions within policy narratives, and the extent of the application to individual leadership approaches.

There is extensive work on variations of research mixed-method approaches, such as that offered by Plowright (2011), Bryman (2008) and Brannen (2005), which represent some of the epistemological implications involved. Some use different methods to provide background context to other data. My approach lies within an interpretative framework, but recognises the different nature of documentary data and that of life history, regarding them as complementary in that each form enhances the others understandings.

In this research, taking into account the way in which a particular form of data may have a greater or lesser epistemological and technical concern with boundaries of forms of 'truth' and 'realities', the methods were chosen to complement and highlight any common factors but from different perspectives. Official state documents, as unique and fixed contemporary historical data, which are publicly available, offer scope for focus on overall influential factors and trends and overall perceived professional identities, but also reveal a political bias. The subjective reflections of the professional narratives are likely to be more concerned with interpretative issues of agency and individual identity but also to contribute to understanding of policy application and interpretation.

Knowledge derived from the use of historical method in relation to documentary material – although a form of group construction – when compared to individual construction of historical reflections on education, offers an opportunity to make use of different forms of evidence. Different disciplinary lenses and voices are used to explore the interplay between complementary insights. Historical documentary analysis of more static documentary data, compared to more active recall during interview discussion and reflection, involves different approaches to the re-telling and re-interpretative process of working with individual narratives (Yin, 2009). Part of the approach to documentary policy involves seeking out the implicit and indirect evidence from fixed documentary data, and considering this alongside individual reflective narratives to offer greater integrated insights into the relationship between policy and leader perceptions. Whilst the strength of leaders' narratives lies in their personal reflection, rather than necessarily in any sense of factual

accuracy, documentary evidence may reflect group consensus at a particular point in time of a group of policy influencers.

In between the disciplines of education and history associated with documentary and life history, research approaches have often taken different tracks, and made different uses of methods and techniques in both the identification and analysis of data and the disciplinary priorities. Gorard and Taylor (2004) conclude that such decisions should be a question of fitness for its purpose in relation to the underlying research questions, but it is necessary to consider what is gained by interdisciplinary work and what it will not offer insights on. My decisions in relation to the overall methodology and particular methods in relation to data, recognise the respective limitations of different sources of evidence. For example, individual narrative includes a high degree of subjectivity in analysing recalled and reflected lived experience perceptions, but there are also implied historical presumptions within central policy documentation. Multiple approaches do offer potential for complementary strengths in illustrating a greater range of alternative insights from both document authors and leaders' own meanings and understandings. The combination of data permits some consideration of the micro, meso and macro levels of influences, as suggested by Bartlett and Vavrus, (2014). These relate to the individual unit micro level within the college; at the organisational meso level and at the national governmental macro level.

### ***Values and Ideologies***

The aim of using elements of both historical documentary and historical oral narrative, was to use an approach which explored and challenged the question of potential polarisation of assumptions and values, much developed in relation to the concept of managerialism and professionalism (Lumby, 2009; Avis, 2002; Gleeson and Shain, 1999 and Randle and Brady, 1997). This could lay between the questions of co-existence or tension of values and influence of business corporate ideas, and those more closely allied to educational teaching and learning values. In the literature the nuances *between* these two ideas is less well developed as is the relationship of policy to lived experience assumptions.

The methodological implications of exploring the development of a business orientation within FE colleges towards CPD, with associated values, led to my research approach of combining insights from primary historical official and public documents with those of individual leaders. As outlined in chapter 1, these viewpoints are important, not only to illustrate different leader contexts and authorial positions, but also historically in colleges during a turbulent period of such influential ongoing significant structural and policy change (Huddleston, 2016). Whilst it is necessary to recognise that each part of the overall methodology would have limitations in terms of what it can illuminate, it was intended to

inform and offer different insights, through different disciplinary methodological lenses, to enhance understanding overall.

The intention in my research was not to identify direct and generalizable causal links, which would be inappropriate to this approach and research questions, but to focus on each set of understandings and perceptions, then to identify similar and different perspectives at the level of common integrated themes and influences. Neither is the intent to suggest any form of 'best practice' since the combinations of influences and applications are likely to be as diverse as the individual leader. Rather it is to identify ways of working which were valued and seen as appropriate by leaders and managers in their reflections. Although each college wide or departmental unit set of data may offer some insights for leadership in comparable contexts, and be transferable to some extent, it is not intended to suggest more than a form of 'case' generalisation across similar contexts in other colleges. There are limitations to this type of research validity, in the sense of external validity and replication (Schofield, 2007). Rather the methodological intention here is to make more explicit, aspects within the complexity of the leaders' different contexts in colleges. This involves the range of ways in which leaders perceived, interpreted and integrated their own professional values with those arising from structural policy structural change and influences.

Via an overall interpretative approach, it is intended to develop a sense of the perceived intersection and relative importance of different influences in the FE college context. The intent is to make use of data sources which may potentially offer in combination, some complementary and contrasting perspectives. Both documentary and professional life history approaches are concerned with the historical trajectory of change within FE; one at a national documentary level and the other at a biographical individual narrative level. The complexities of their combination, interplay and intersection offer an opportunity to illuminate issues in their respective contemporary contexts but from different perspectives. The effect of the narrators' own triggers in the telling, and that of some researcher prompts, further structure narratives and offer deeper and wider perceptive insights, especially given the scale of ongoing historical change involved during the incorporated period. As a record of historically unique circumstances, the documentary sources offer both implied and explicit evidence, whilst the professional life history narrative approach facilitates exploration of experiences.

### ***Narrative methodologies***

There is no universal agreement as to definition and approach to different forms of narrative such as biography, life history and narrative storying, beyond a need to take account of the narrative form as well as the themes it illuminates. The terms life story and life history are sometimes used interchangeably, but life story more commonly as relating to whole life

(English, 2008; Chamberlayne et al., 2004). Thus, professional life history, taking account of earlier life experiences but focusing on the professional element, falls between the two. When considering life history interviews as oral history, it is seen in terms of both commentary and reflection on historical events and circumstances, but the narrator also has their own part in it. As Gardner (2003) observes, both involve selection and interpretation of historical events and experiences. Whilst whole life studies are also termed biographical studies, historical professional life research is a selective approach which focuses more on the periods of professional practice, but does not ignore the potential influence of earlier, and sometimes different professional experiences.

However wider understandings of narrative perceptions can be considered by looking across professional life histories for both personal experiential individual themes and their relationship to wider policy issues. This has been recognised as a useful means of analysis within professional life history approaches to leadership in higher education (Floyd, 2009). The intent in my study is to identify perceptions not just at a point in time but also to consider change through the periods of leadership post-incorporation, which cross significant policy changes identified via the historical documentation.

Analysis and reporting may involve raw data with the emphasis on the narrators' story, to threads being narrated in a form of thematic analysis. Connelly and Clandinin (1990), suggested that temporal structures can involve intent, value and significance as a methodological approach to analysis of narratives. They also note the influence of researcher interpretation in a methodology involving life history methods, and in analysis effectively 're-storying' the narrative. Connelly and Clandinin recognise the need to balance the detailed accounts of life experiences, including the opportunity to understand policy from the participants view in this case, with the application of some theory and abstraction.

Professional life history allows for interpretation of leader's less formalised themes compared to those pre-structured by a researcher. In a study by MacBeath (2008) narrative approaches allowed for the less visible and implicit themes to be developed, for example in relation to personal or professional values. Life history methodologies used by Issler and Nixon (2007), in investigating community adult education workers 'authentic voice', at historic stages in policy, were used as a temporal lens in two ways. To identify formative influences but also to use timeline related developments as signposts for the connection to development; in their case for evidence of FE adult policy effects. This approach enables a consideration of multiple leaders' identities over time and in my study to link the timeline of policy changes to values applied to the individual leadership.

The use of narrative approaches alongside historical analysis of documentation aims to identify associated insights but recognises the different strengths and limitations of such a



combination of approaches, from the leader and from policy perspectives. A strength of personal narrative is that it recognises the sort of interweaving and intertwining of political policy influences, with the experiences of the individual leaders; a process which has been identified in relation to teachers by Amundson (1995). Whilst the influence and potential tensions of constructions from different perspectives was identified by Bawazeer and Gunter (2016), there is scope for potential complementarity. This allows for comparison of the policy theme to the way in which it is enacted by the leader in their own context, but is qualified by the particular experiences and contexts involved. For the interpretative historical researcher, individual constructions by the leaders allow for specific contextual factors moderating broad organisational or national perspectives. This is of particular relevance in such diverse contexts as FE both in terms of scope for leadership alternatives and in relation to individual leaders' backgrounds and experience.

Cortazzi (1993; 2002) suggests that there is relevance in recognising issues such as voice, emphasis, repetition and quotation of the lived experiences represented in professional life histories. Yet Cortazzi, although recognising some disciplinary differences to the foci of analytical approaches - such as those around linguistics, sociology and anthropology - is primarily concerned with narrative and linguistic structures within conversational analysis, rather than historiography of incorporation which is more relevant to the focus of my current research study.

#### *The professional life history process*

Following a professional life history narrative approach, co-constructed 'interviews' were undertaken in the form of loosely structured narrative conversations (McCormack, 2004), to encourage thoughtful more open-ended reflection and to increase potential for deeper narrative insights. My approach offered scope for greater exploratory options via previously untold perceptions (Casey, 1995). The aim was a process led and primarily constructed by the participants priorities.

Since the data were to be used to inform the leadership of the professional development overall focus, in each case I began with an introductory background, repeating the information contained in the initial invitation to participate (Appendix 6). Questions and comment on the process were invited, although it was necessary to avoid imposing my experience and precise expectations on their constructed perceptions. The focus of the research in broad terms was explained, although emphasising that there were few assumptions about the way in which different leaders in different contexts may have operated and on what basis.

Each participant was asked to begin with a brief outline of their professional background and key influences, both within and outside FE, and this included comment on areas of educational and/or other professional involvement pre-incorporation. This was followed by a discussion and assurance that all reasonable means were to be taken, by which anonymity and confidentiality of organisational, personal and professional detail was to be achieved when the research was written up. It was discussed that the use of unique professional life history methods resulted in relative, not absolute anonymity standards. The interviews then proceeded into the area of how the leaders supported and developed their teams and their perceptions of the most significant values, ideologies and leadership practices involved when considering how they saw their CPD leadership role.

Given the less structured nature of the professional narrative approach and the need to relate underlying themes in the historical documents, an initial checklist or 'prompt framework' was produced to use within both methods, (see Appendix 3). In the life history conversations, it was used selectively, without unnecessary leading of the interviewee, where a particular theme was raised but not necessarily developed by the narrator. Although some pre-prepared references to a particular policy intent were fed in as appropriate, as developmental prompts, care was taken to avoid significant disruption to the participants own construction of the narrative. This encouraged interviewees to raise specific influential policy documentary issues from their own situation and experience although they might refer to the influence and consequences of policy without naming a particular policy document.

The typical length of interview was 1.5 to 2 hours but some were more than half a day in length at the instigation of the leader, and one was shorter given the range of their experience and conciseness of response. Participants were invited to review the data following the session but none chose to do so, although several interviewees responded by email correspondence after the event to offer further detail and to clarify the sequence of their experiences on reflection. Many of the interviewees on being thanked for their involvement expressed considerable satisfaction in the hope of being able to 'offer something back' to those in the sector by sharing their experience via their research involvement.

The use of professional life history narratives is a product of reflection whilst the analysis of policy documentary material is as primary source material of its historical time. There is evidence of tacit and explicit elements in both but there are some differences in the respective approaches to analysis. The process of analysis used in this thesis followed that of Goodley et al. (2004) which involved extensive immersion in the data through repeated active listening to the recordings and document reading, to locate the context of the arguments, descriptions and temporal ordering. Goodley et al. (pp.130-134). categorises

this as identifying a framework of ‘plot’, ‘sub-plot’ ‘relationships’ and ‘placing people within cultural contexts and social structures. The coding of the transcriptions of the data was then related to the manual coding across documents and finally linked to theoretical explanations.

The iterative nature of this part of the research process involved consideration of each professional life history interview, during and following each interview. This allowed for further refinement of potential probes for subsequent interviewees. Although some of the data was initially ‘piloted’ for analysis via software, this was not pursued and a manual process was used. My conclusion was similar to Rury (2006), who was satisfied that the more subtle nuances of the ideas involved – in this case of leadership thinking and experience – would be effectively captured in this way, especially in the case of consistency of a single researcher working with complex historical issues.

Adapted from an approach of McCormack (2004), appropriate for analysing narrative interview conversations, repeated and noted listening was developed as a way of identifying how the complexity of experience is constructed and to consider how terminology is used, alongside an analysis of the sequence of the personal narrative. Neither the trajectory of the influence of experience nor the themes were necessarily presented in a strict historical event sequence form during the interview. The repetition and links at different stages, emphasised both the enduring and evolving important values, their development and their application in different ways and contexts during different periods of the leadership.

Full transcription followed for checking against audio records of all interviews. There was a need to maintain both sequence and thematic considerations in analysing data for individual and policy themes in that sequential relevance was as important to understanding as the process of identifying particular corporate themes. The process of further coding from the written transcriptions was then developed through the stages of further thematic and refined coding (see Appendix 2 for an example extract).

Casey (1995) is concerned about the limitation of fracturing isolated quotes via the use of a thematic approach and it was necessary to ensure that specific points were seen within the historic contexts. The use of both local and national types of narrative data offered analytic consideration of links between them. The analytical approach to the professional life history narratives aimed to both identify common issues across cases, albeit involving different contexts and histories, whilst also recognising the extent to which the meanings are interrelated historically with the policy trajectory. In management disciplinary terms, Fenton and Langley (2011, p.1171) suggest that ‘narrative is seen as a way of giving meaning to the practice that emerges [...] constituting an overall sense of direction or purpose’. This was one way used in this research to identify elements of strategy and politics

from the public and individual narratives, but also to foreground the individual values and contexts of specific actions.

The complications of the process of analysing storied narratives is well recognised. McCormack (2004) notes that in narrative research, in-depth conversations, across lifetimes face researchers with 'a daunting task' in terms of the scale and depth of the data. Clandinin (2013, p.19) suggests that analysis of lived experience may align with a thematic, structural or linguistic route but is 'relational across time, places and relationships', as well as experience and context. Although not following the linguistic analytical model in relation to grammatical structures, parts of the background to the framework were incorporated into this educational leadership analysis in terms of policy terminology.

The aim was to seek out what historians still see as a form of witting and unwitting testimony (Marwick, 1989). Despite the extent and complexity of the narrative analysis research task, the strength of a professional life history approach lies within the depth and detail of the data in individual cases, and the capacity to capture unique experience (Chamberlayne et al., 2004). The aim in this study was not to analyse the language of the discourse in conversational linguistic grammatical terms, but to use a referential but subjective meaning approach to highlight what was flagged by the interviewee, as key influences in relation to specific policy issues. This was then related to the opportunities for, and challenges to, leading professional development in their particular context, in relation to national policy levers.

In analysing via narrative methodologies, although it is possible to identify some universal roles in stories, there is also a clear distinction between the narrative as chain of influential events and that of a thematic approach. The analysis was intended (following Silverman, 2006) to use qualitative data to achieve a theoretically informed narrative, but not to be theoretically driven initially. Some conceptual literature had suggested potential themes and informed potential foci for coding across documents and professional life histories. It helped to identify perceptions of accountable practice versus valued professional practice, as well as concepts of professional compliance as opposed to agency.

The importance of the narrative lay within the associations the individual made between different elements of their professional experience and development. The professional life histories represent complex realities and interrelationships between the personal, organisational and policy contexts via an overall span of recollection, reflection and situated interpretation. In this study the analysis aimed to foreground the different elements and relationships between policy and leadership practice.

To achieve insights into the different types of narratives it was necessary to approach them in several ways. As individual trajectories and influences across professional life histories in post-incorporation FE; as interaction with wider sector themes in relation to policy emphases; and as consideration of similarities and differences across the leadership roles studied.

In the process of analysis of the life histories it was necessary to recognise that different terminology may be used by individuals, and in particular college units, although the ideas expressed were comparable. Different perceptions and influences from those who had occupational or educational professional experience and pre and/or post-incorporation college leadership in further education, were also considered.

#### *The historical documentary processes*

The process of analysis of professional life history data sought to identify the extent to which the documentary policy influences are reflected in CPD leadership. They are also influenced historically by the individual leaders' perceptions of forms of agency, types of accountability and identity. McCulloch (2004) highlights the need to undertake life histories of individuals as a means to ensure that those who actually participated are represented directly in the historical dimension. However, undertaking professional life history interviews in this research in *combination* with documentary analysis, and ensuring a span of different periods of post-incorporation further education, reflects to reflect changing historical FE contexts. Hammersley (2006) suggests that there is a balance between dynamism and tension 'between trying to understand people's perspectives from the inside and viewing them ... more distantly' (p11). This is where the professional life history data suggest the former, but the policy documentation a view of the latter national overarching influence of policy themes.

In this study the historical analysis of documentation is not intended to be identified simply as background context to the life history data, but as another data source evaluated using historical documentary approaches. Whilst each set of data is seen in context of the other, this research sought to elicit the ways in which they interact. The historical policy representation of college staff and leaders in sector documentation, can be of a more generic FE sector type rather than differentiating between different colleges and identities. Also, methodology involving historical documentation raises other potential tensions. McCulloch (2004, p.50) acknowledges that: 'issues of theorisation [...] raise problems that have often been left implicit or ignored' (in historical documentary analysis). Such methodological tensions between public, private, official and personal or professional understandings in the data need to be differentiated in the process of analysis.

Historical perceptions of the relationship between the micro and macro perspectives and methods within the historiography of incorporation, raise issues of potential for deeper and wider understandings, but tensions over time between them. The historical dimension in this study relates not only to historical documentary analytical methodologies, but also as McCulloch and Watts (2003) acknowledge, how educational historians work with theory and methodology. They argue that historians' point of connection with narrative approaches in education is seen in terms of the researcher explicitly aligning, reflecting and critiquing their voice at the intersection of biography and history. This raises the issue of the ways in which theory is used; both to be applied directly and adding to how the research is framed.

Relevant public documentary sources were identified primarily in two ways. Firstly, the overarching legislation for the sector was identified, including changes to regulations and governmental additional guidance to colleges. Then the main government and national professional development reports and FE government strategy documents were scrutinised for influence on, and leaders' responses to, policy changes. The process included the identification of membership of review groups, the bodies they represented and also the range of witnesses, organisations and individual inputs into such documents and documentary sponsorship.

Where there was a named author of any official document, this was checked for background of their experience and roles, where available, if it was not already recorded in the report. In addition, the publicly available documents of major professional development bodies were identified and reviewed for their self-presentation of role and priorities and compared to government policy presentation, for example those of the Institute for Learning and the Education and Training Foundation.

In the case of Inspection reports they were used at two points in the research process. For the main college for the periods of leadership and management involvement of the participant, reports were reviewed initially for background context, but then specifically for the chronology of the development of that college and its staff range. This involved identification of inspection report feedback and grading and any specific mention of CPD along with restructuring and amalgamation factors. Further analysis of reports was necessary after interview since all participants had led in more than one college, and all the college contexts changed, some repeatedly, owing to amalgamations and internal restructuring. As well as cross referencing to reflections this process also added useful additional context to each individual history and contributed to the process of developing profiles for each participant leader, (see chapters 5 and 6).

McCulloch's (2004, p.14) view was that to use national documentary data 'without regard to life histories of individuals who participate in its application can be regarded as a methodological defect'. For this study the relevance of documents for analysis is as important as that arising from the individual histories. However, it is not simply a question of differentiating between primary oral and public data or that produced by historians' interpretation later, or of seeking initial general background contextual information of historical events. Rather, in documentary analysis this involved looking beyond the explicit assertions of the documented policy, in order to align with the justifications behind the leaders' experience and values which informed their implementation strategies.

In historical developmental terms it is necessary to identify perceptions, not just at a point in time but to consider historical change through different periods of individual leadership post-incorporation. This in turn, crosses significant policy changes identified via the historical documentation of the period. My approach to analysis of the documentary sources is therefore based on that of McCulloch (2004) which draws on traditional historical documentary questions. For example, whether the author would have been in a position to offer informed judgement, which determines the quality of the data in the context of when it was produced, and for what purpose. The reliability, meaning and theorisation of the data is based on these questions, as is consideration of the biases evident from the text, its background and authorship. In this context it is necessary to take account of data as an official political view and its assumptions around intended outcomes of policy. This involves understanding the document and its references in its contemporary context, not from a linguistic viewpoint but in terms of the official discourse of incorporation of FE. Thus, the research intention is to identify the assumptions and ideology behind the expressed sentiments and structures, some of which were accountable directives. This may involve what is unexpectedly omitted as well as that declared.

Drawing further on McCulloch (2004), in terms of educational documentary analysis the processes used in relation to each document were as follows. In order to provide informed judgement on the quality of the data it is normally necessary to consider the authenticity of the document, although there are few questions regarding the verification of the documentary origin of the official documents used here in this respect. In terms of meaning and reliability, in the sense of the assumptions behind these documents, analysis is dependent on the position of the author/s, and potential bias from a political viewpoint. There is often only survival of documentary evidence which was considered important enough to either relate to wide communication and influence, or to relate to a particularly serious and contentious issue for which comparable high-profile documents exist. Although some central bodies produce responses to policy, the individual leaders' response is normally less accessible by this means. Most of the official policy reports in my research area led to, or were informed by, legislation or regulation which broadly followed a similar

discourse. For example, the Lingfield report (2012) on professionalism referred to disputes surrounding the policy of compulsory recording of FE CPD by individual staff as well as the specific recommendation for a policy change, but did not widen the argument beyond general employer views to illustrate the specifics of union dissatisfaction (Fletcher, 2015).

### *Interdisciplinary methodological issues*

A professional life history interview approach which can include part of a leaders' story alongside documentary analysis, can offer insights in an interdisciplinary way, which falls between art and science, education and history, yet be a predominantly interpretivist approach overall. It is necessary for a fuller understanding of life histories to deal with the descriptive narrative threads, more commonly found within historical methods as well as to consider cross thematic implications (Bishop 2012; Floyd 2012). There is also a need to interrogate the lived experience data, acknowledged by those who argue for a distinction between narrative entire life stories, and their sequential relevance in view of the reflection and mediation involved in the telling (Gardner, 2003). The analytical approach of the public documentary historian has a wider concern with issues of the position of the authorship to comment on the evidence base in relation to specific events and its public presentation.

The use of historical narrative approaches to analyses of documentation and life histories, aims to identify associated insights but still recognise the different strengths and limitations of such a combination of approaches. As Goodson (2003, p.33) recognises, a narrative approach 'allows us to move beyond (or to the side of) the main paradigms of inquiry' and therefore enhances the potential scope of influences. Gage (2007) argues that where insight rather than prediction or control is sought paradigms do not necessarily compete, but can be used pragmatically in relation to different topics, in a sense of interdisciplinary collaboration via deep reflection for fuller meaning. This informed my decision to see the individual narratives alongside the assumptions of FE policy.

Life history has been conceptualised as individual voices from below, or as local, compared to what (Morrill, 2007) sees as master narratives, yet can accept the contribution of a range of versions of the past from documentary sources, which can offer a sense of internal validity. However, for professional life history there are issues of selective memory recall relating to historic perceptions of lived experience, which might involve institutional myth, but become part of the narrative story (Lumby and English, 2009).

My research design, involving both education and history as disciplines, is influenced not only by historical disciplinary traditions and methodological frameworks, but also via the nature of educational content of the individual leaders' narrative, whether departmental or at cross-college level. This involves identification of operational issues, and the temporal



element in terms of changing and shifting combinations of influences over time. In addition, the issue of subjective memory recall in relation to reflection on historical events, may provide depth of unique combinations of construction but limits the generalisability of the detail (Alheit, 1992). Although selective in terms of memory, reflections do offer a sense of shape and meaning to the individual (Plummer, 2007), whereas documentary material provides a different wider canvass as a result of collaborative and often political inputs.

Whilst each source of data offers insights within its own philosophical and methodological boundaries, each may also be seen in the context of wider understandings. This study seeks to elicit the ways in which the historiographical, narrative life history and professional development conceptual implications interact in understanding the influence on FE leadership and professional development. The process involves constructions and re-constructions both as perceived by the leaders themselves, and by the authors of the historical policy documents, as well as the researcher interpretations. In this sense sources offer narratives; either personal or public; the latter being more in the tradition of public grand historical narratives or broad discourses.

McCulloch's (2004) methodological pluralism advocates combinations of documentary and non-documentary data, which involve the application of an interdisciplinary lens to the understanding of meanings, although it is important to take account of the limits to interdisciplinary methodological issues in analysis. For example, historical approaches inform but do not predict, and historical recall suggests reflected perceptions which may differ from intentions at the time. In this case my research is directly and explicitly based on, and informed by, documentary policy and individual data as both can offer a sense of the intended assumptions about how it could have been or was applied.

Nevertheless, the use of any narrative approach historically recognises that it is a product of selective private reflections, narrative identity, and orally represents a reflective performance after the event and period concerned (Lumby and English, 2013; Gardner, 2003). Whilst professional life history narrative is recognised as individually constructed evidence, there is also an element of co-construction of assumptions involved given the relatively informal nature of the interview conversations. This also applies to joint authorship of documentation. In terms of historical events, significant points of change, such as Acts of Parliament and publication of national reports, provide data which may confirm or challenge other presentations of an event or decision from different perspectives or from within different roles.

One way to consider the different forms of historical data is to see oral history as the direct face of the author which may lie behind the text. 'In contrast, the official document [...] evoke(s) the expansive contexts of the social world [...] in front of the text' (Gardner, 2003,

p.188). In disciplinary terms the research approach ranges across education and history disciplinary boundaries and traditional associated methodologies, which create a more complex understanding overall which is reflected in the description of education as ‘a loose amalgam’ of interdisciplinary approaches (Humes and Bryce 2003 p.176).

Although there are many forms of discipline associated with the whole range of narrative methodologies and perspectives from psychology, literary analysis, linguistics and sociology, those used in the field of educational leadership and management in turn are derived from varied disciplinary combinations. These include business and management, which in the case of this study could involve strategies for corporate business development. Also, it has been widely recognised that there are significant interrelationships between different disciplinary approaches. For example, Middleton (2004) suggests that historians and sociologists of knowledge, from a range of theoretical persuasions, have argued that research (topics, methods, and orientations) is influenced by the specific and changing historical, geographical, political, cultural, institutional and discursive circumstances of its production.

#### *Towards a holistic understanding*

Neither one distinct narrative form nor one single historical approach, fit easily within the range of disciplines and epistemological approaches associated within the ‘educational’ umbrella. Few studies encompass and intentionally deal with both historical documents as data, rather than background, alongside individual historical narrative data. More commonly they use one of these as source material to compare assumptions within that data range with some contextual background in each case. Although these research approaches are to some extent dealt with methodologically in different ways, their integration can contribute to a more holistic understanding. The primary sector example, in the study of Hammersley-Fletcher and Strain (2011) uses an integrated combination to illuminate agency in leaders’ interpretation of policy within an equally unstable national policy environment as FE. However, few other studies in FE using biographical data, specifically align the data narrative with documentary data to conceptualise themes. My study involves use of lived experience reflections primarily limited to professional lives, intersecting with the national policy material. Within all this though, historical change, values and perceptions are a focus whether of policy or the individual.

The remaining sections of this chapter are concerned with an overview of the research process; the processes of analysis; ethics and a summary of the research design rationale.

## **The research process overview, methods, techniques and analysis**

### ***Research processes***

This section develops in more detail the research process, the background to development of the focus of the research and the nature and reasoning for the sample. In order to determine the initial parameters of the research to identify appropriate data to inform the research questions, initial official documentation was identified, from the sector literature searches, divided by incorporation government date periods of influence, (see Appendix 1 for chronology overview of reports and sector structural change).

The overall approach taken to structuring data was to initially and separately identify the chronology of each professional life history narrative and relate it to the historical documentary policy chronology. Comparative codes were built up into broader themes in both sources to evaluate the extent to which the influences inter-related and offered opportunities for leadership agency, in view of a range of influences and accountabilities. Categories of documentation identified included funding priority documents and national reports on FE, FE national body documentation and legislation. This was iteratively and subsequently developed by cross reference to specific documentary references highlighted during the life history reflections. The documentary sources themselves were also used to determine and review the chronology of the sector key structural changes after incorporation. Evaluation of key documents was then based on the criteria of the major cross sector references to the regulatory and accountability requirements in relation to staff, alongside the funding implications for colleges and thus staff capacity and policy development foci. Introductory and review reports of the national FE support bodies were also considered where they focused on how the post-incorporated colleges had to operate within business terminology and structures, entrenched within the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act. It was also necessary to compare the influence of the pre-incorporation college ethos which highlighted the political market responsiveness policy originating in the 1980s. From the documentation specific references and implications for FE CPD were followed up, as well as the broader sector influences which could impact college leadership and management.

All interviews were initially digitally recorded, and after a repeated listening process, (discussed in the section on life history analysis), were transcribed verbatim. The preliminary conversations with volunteers and informal background conversations were noted, but full recording and transcription was undertaken for those who had agreed to proceed to full life history interviews. Verbal agreement was sought to make brief written notes of the preliminary conversations but with the assurance that they may be used by myself to help determine the research scope but would not be quoted or used directly in the

reported research. The full interview recordings were repeatedly reviewed by listening for both sequence and detailed themes. Therefore, there were two stages involved: preliminary informal conversations regarding the proposed research and background then full life history interviews in the form of narrative conversations.

Participants for full interviews were offered a choice of my office location, their location or any alternative in which they would feel most comfortable which would allow for recording, confidentiality and their easy access and convenience. Most participants chose a private room at their work location, and the rest either my location or a private room within other premises.

### *Pilot study*

A pilot study was undertaken in order to judge the relevance of a largely unstructured approach via professional narrative life histories, to encompass the widest sense of a leader's perception of what CPD leadership and management comprised. This contributed to a perception of major influences, from policy, college and individual experience. The boundaries of the brief were initially broad to encourage leader self-perceptions of their CPD role, (see Appendix 6 for research brief used). The participant for this initial pilot professional life history was chosen to represent a leader with both previous commercial training and school experience, who had FE experience of leadership and management at middle then senior levels throughout the FE corporate period, and who currently held senior management responsibility for CPD across a college. The intention was to review the life history approach to interviewing and identify initial themes to follow up. Subsequently it was planned to consider leaders at different levels, in different leadership and management contexts and over different historical periods during incorporation. The pilot revealed differences in approach to CPD at the interviewees departmental and cross-college role levels. It also highlighted other issues to add to potential influencing factors to follow up such as that of amalgamations, part-time staff and cost-effectiveness of business strategies. Whilst the pilot broadened the scope, and perhaps made it more difficult to extract the key CPD implications, the results of a largely unstructured approach were seen to be useful if unpredictable.

However, the pilot process did focus down on some specifics for consideration within both documentary and interview methods. It included a lengthy informal stage and a full recording of a following session, and this data can be found in Chapter 6 under Leader SMPB. Given the exploratory nature of this pilot, the interview process was the longest of all the participants, involving much of a day, and at their instigation was very fully developed. This proved very positive in guiding a little more potential structure for subsequent interviews and reflection on potential policy emphases. It also informed

subsequent more detailed informal pre-interview discussions and further development of the sample.

### *Prompts and corporate policy themes*

Although my approach to the research questions was intentionally iterative during the interview stages, given the potential for myriad responses within the diverse college units, initial potential prompts were developed from the literature and documentary emphases. These were reviewed between each successive interview in a form of the process of Gorard and Taylor's (2004) progressive focusing and used selectively as appropriate to the context and role of each participant (see Appendix 3 for full list).

The initial broad prompts had been refined from earlier work which had been developed from informal discussion about the proposed research with volunteer peer networks of staff, managers and leaders across FE as the opportunity arose. I had extracted business terms used in relation to FE from documentary sources, and from FE management experience, and sought perceptions of the extent to which they were recognised by leaders in post-incorporation FE. The process was not intended to be quantitatively analysed but just to inform the extent to which such terms had become part of the common discourse, at three post-incorporation points between 1993 and 1996. This helped to determine the potential range of the business terminology in use, to inform ideas for initial interview prompts and to serve as pointers towards potential themes to explore. This preliminary work took place prior to my current research but where appropriate could offer some background, but was not used in any structured directive way in the current research. It did enable the research to recognise and make best use of the interviewee's particular experience within this methodology and to sensitively prompt without leading and distorting the narrative perceptions unduly. Very few prompts were needed to be introduced in the event as the participant's narrative flowed clearly and smoothly following the introduction to the research

### *The sample*

This part of the chapter explains the way in which the sample was recruited and selected to achieve the 10 final participants, whose characteristics are discussed under criteria and indicated in detail in appendices 4 and 5. Sample selection was primarily based on opportunity access to volunteer leaders via historic and existing researcher access to FE research and development networks in the south of England. The process included a further purposive stage as suggested for example by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2002). This approach was considered appropriate for the multiple criteria involved in the research focus and did not aim for generalisability. The complexities of professional life histories and of

career contexts limited precise selection prior to the full interview stage and resulted in atypical cases. A subjective judgement of leader typicality was made, based on college nature and types within the sector, and the leaders and colleges were not statistically representative. However, the diverse contexts within FE colleges, evident from FE literature and my own professional experience, were expected to be echoed through different leadership careers, their unit experience and approaches to professional development.

#### *Sample criteria*

The criteria for selection covered a need to not only cover historic college changes in general FE colleges over the incorporated period but also different functional roles of leaders, a range of previous professional experience and different disciplinary backgrounds, age and leadership experience and historical experience of incorporated policy at different levels of involvement. Broadly there was a sample range of leaders working in differently sized and types of colleges, as noted in chapters 1 and 2, but over the decades concerned at different times many of the colleges changed size and scope owing to restructuring, mergers and amalgamations. These changes are indicated in the appendices.

The changes in governmental departmental responsibilities for FE, and ever-changing detail of the policy for this diverse sector did not allow for clear cut periodization for samples and this was compounded by regular change in quangos, regulatory and professional bodies during this period. Since one research intention was to offer insights into implementation of policy changes over time, which could have affected professional development, the range of individual leaders identified for further conversations included as far as accessible a typical range of leaders. Within the categories of organisational size and leadership roles in general colleges of further education in England, the sample needed to reflect examples of different leader backgrounds and historically a range of FE college corporate experience. Yet the very diversity of FE colleges, as discussed in chapters 1 and 2, in terms of history, size and associated funding levels, changing range and levels of provision, geographical location and social and economic situations - plus a high level of overall change and restructuring over the whole period - limited scope to identify 'typical' college leaders to consider in depth. The sample was not intended or feasible to be comprehensively representative of general FE colleges as a whole, nor of leaders of all discipline areas, but attempts were made to ensure a range of both primarily academic and vocationally oriented leaders were included.

The criteria used resulted in coverage of a reasonable range of comparative general FE English college leaders including factors of: college size; staff led and the general history and context across the colleges, (see Appendices 4 and 5). Sample options against the broad

criteria were affected by the limitations of typical staff turnover and ongoing turbulence in the sector and thus relatively rapid role changes, although not all of these became fully apparent until the full professional life history process was undertaken.

The sample of leaders identified were reasonably balanced across those who had led staff within a range of different areas within FE colleges, at different levels of seniority in the college structure, during different periods of post-incorporation and with different professional backgrounds. In addition, some participants were identified as having had direct FE policy influence and the final 10th participant was approached directly, identified via network contact referral, to balance the gender sample characteristics at senior level. Otherwise the sample was not necessarily typical in terms of gender through the period; the majority of participants were female and in the sector as a whole there were different proportions at senior and middle management level at different historical points. Hall (1994) estimated in 1993 that at least 62% of managers were male, although this related to further and higher education combined. By 2015 Fletcher estimated that 60% of staff in FE were female. Jameson (2006) noted that by 1997 the 3% of female college principals in 1990 had only risen to 17% but by 2002 the numbers of female middle managers had risen. However, in this research different college leaders' contexts and periods of leadership were prioritised rather than a specific focus on the various gender estimates or gendered influences on leadership.

For each participant the context and type of situation was determined by the size and scope of their main incorporated periods of FE leadership. As indicated in chapter 1, broad FEFC college size statistics were used but were cross referenced to inspection reports to determine significant subsequent college size changes. As discussed previously, the final sample of leaders and managers was determined also by an intention to cross contextual categories and in broad terms to relate to general FE colleges falling within small, medium and larger sized groups at the point of incorporation. Typical college size categories were determined initially using recurrent funding allocations (FEFC, 1993), to identify broad categories by general college size by income. The largest at that point in time (over £20m) represented only 3% of all colleges; 78% fell within a medium category of £6-20m and the smallest with an allocation of less than £5m represented 14% of the total general colleges of FE and tertiary colleges. The remainder, whilst listed under general colleges were of a specialist college nature. The broad descriptive categories of initial size were used to determine a typical, rather than an entirely representative range of colleges, as discussed in earlier chapters by type. There were historical limitations of this sample in terms of changing college size, staffing related to staff turnover, career mobility and amalgamations. These ongoing changes in size and scope were identified during interviews and were cross-referenced to Inspection report descriptors. The geography of the colleges involved in the sample was largely determined by the location range which was directly accessible for face

to face discussion of the research. This covered the southern regions of England but included urban, rural and coastal college contexts and facilitated the location of the interviews.

The need for a mix of subject staff backgrounds and changing roles added a layer of complexity to the sample in that staff do not necessarily share a similar professional experience base even within one department. Leading staff in adult education, basic education, vocational, or FE in HE areas, and particularly of part-time colleagues, raises particular expectations, practical, cultural and contractual circumstances which influence leadership options. Whilst the sample is not intended to be statistically representative of the FE colleges, it does offer some scope for comparability of the cases which span the main curriculum, cross college leadership and management roles within FE colleges.

In terms of age the participants ranged from their 30s to 60s. Length of service across all the full interview participants involved experience in FE leadership roles ranging from approximately three to over thirty-five years from pre-1992 onwards, during different periods of incorporation. Just over half of the leaders were currently in FE posts at the time of the interview; the rest reflected on previous roles. Those leaders still in FE posts may have felt more constrained by their current employment, but leaders of earlier periods may have offered greater reflection over time. All had either previous commercial, industrial, or other professional experience prior to entering FE.

#### *Recruitment and selection of sample*

As discussed earlier in this chapter under research process, two stages were involved in the process of determining and refining the sample to achieve the range of leaders' contexts. Initial informal background discussions with 18 contacts - who via FE professional network links had been identified as having an interest in the research - were made before volunteers were invited to take part in full life-history interviews. The initial stage was helpful in that it offered further background to sector change to follow up via documentation prior to the next stage. The informal conversations with those who had expressed an initial general interest in this area of research, not only provided background peer-sharing of experience but enabled some identification of areas of experience and specific professional development involvement. Not all of these contacts were able to proceed to full interviews and there was also some duplication of similar experience and contexts, its historic extent and nature in general FE colleges. In the latter cases some leaders, considered against all the criteria, were not pursued for full life-history interviews but thanked for their contribution to preliminary discussions. The sample, which was reduced from 18 participants to 10, needed to achieve a reasonable basis for a balance of middle and senior managers and to include those with direct and indirect involvement with policy, both at



college and national level. Based on these needs, the subsequent stage was discussed with those agreeing to initial conversations and agreement was reached which determined the final sample to proceed to detailed life history interviews.

The opportunity sample available via volunteers from these regional FE networks and contacts did not initially neatly fit purposively within the main structural historical periods of post-incorporation or the entire range of sample criteria. Therefore, there was an iterative element involved. In order to cover the range a form of a snowball technique to identifying participants was used to locate leaders with sample characteristics. Initial contacts and network links were used to recommend contacts to approach who met the remaining criteria for period, leadership level and type and involvement with CPD leadership. This completed the criteria range identified to achieve a reasonably typical selection of participants. In particular this applied to the decision to identify one senior leader which offered a gender balance between participants, although this was not a particular focus nor intended to be representative of the college sector overall. The experience of leadership across historical careers frequently encompassed a range of the criteria in relation to the selection of the middle leaders and managers.

The main sample as a whole comprising the 10 final participants who undertook full life-history interviews, offers some reasonable coverage across general FE colleges, the main post-incorporation periods and the criteria indicated above. In addition, key periods of influential FE structural changes for professional development were included within the experience of the leaders sampled and account was taken of coverage of individuals' historical professional trajectory across different FE roles and post-incorporation periods. Full details of the individual characteristics of the sample with notes of explanation discussed in this section are in Appendix 4 for middle managers and Appendix 5 for senior managers.

## **Ethics**

My research conforms to the current Open University (OU) code of practice for research in respect of ethical approval, risk to participants, data security and confidentiality. A copy of ethical approval is documented at the end of the appendices. Risk elements on the OU risk checklist were determined to be very low risk for this research. Many of these relate to studies involving children, physical or psychological risk and the sharing of confidential data with others. The relevant confidentiality issues are discussed in this part of the chapter.

Guidance from the British Educational Research Association (BERA) ethical guidelines (2004) applicable at the time of interviewing was also adhered to in relation to the approach and methods being fit for purpose; having informed consent; avoiding risk to participants

and anonymisation. Following the publication of the updated BERA ethical guidelines (2018) these were reviewed for any aspects not previously accounted for but social media and online community data for example was not used in this research. The issue of potential sensitivity of personal data was discussed fully with participants and appropriate forms of anonymisation agreed and consented to (see Appendix 6).

Whilst it was discussed with participants that the use of unique professional life history methods resulted in relative, not absolute anonymity, all reasonable steps to achieve this were taken. For example, one participant mentioned a particular innovative and well publicised course which would have been identifiable to that college, so the specific example was discussed and a form of words agreed in more generic terms. Participants were reassured that the original data would be kept securely under password protection as required by the UK Data Protection Act of 1998, and in this case only for the duration of the research, after which it would be deleted. Participants were reminded that they should indicate during and at the end of their reflections, if any aspects arose which should not be recorded, for reasons of confidentiality or sensitivity, in relation to themselves or their professional context. This was particularly important given the nature of this reflection which was often of a particularly personal professional type and may not have been expressed elsewhere. This takes account of the observation of Miller (2005) that life history research may involve particularly invasive, lengthy and detailed data, and in this current research some interviewees had moved on to other educational sectors and roles, but others continued as leaders and managers in the FE or lifelong learning and skills sectors. There were potential issues of organisational confidentiality given commercially competitive markets, so this was carefully and specifically explored with each leader both before the interview was agreed to and again at the beginning and end of each interview. This provided a check that there was agreement on the means to ensure confidentiality of any part of the narrative and the boundaries of any subsequent publication.

These ethical obligations to participants, as discussed by Brinkmann (2007), and the ethical implications of using less structured and informal life history approaches, as evaluated by Levison (2010), were also taken into account, to ensure appropriate standards of anonymisation. As the methodology involved seeking data from published documentary material as well as personal professional life history data, different ethical considerations apply in each case. All of the latter involved adult professionals who were asked and agreed to participate in their personal professional capacity. They were assured of individual and organisational anonymity by agreed designation in broad categories, where the key contextual focus is no more specific than that represented within the national policy sector documentation and publicly available material. Profiles of individuals were agreed to be presented by ensuring that potentially identifiable features were generalised to apply to a category of leader, experience and college context widely recognised across colleges.

Participants were assured that the individually identifiable email records of their informed consent and the data would be kept securely for the duration of the research but would be presented as anonymised examples within the thesis. An anonymised copy of email correspondence on the research background and consent is indicated at Appendix 6.

Discussion and confirmation of these arrangements was reiterated at the beginning, and during each recorded interview and reviewed again at the end. Where a named institution or individual was mentioned during the interview, participants were assured that that identifiable contextual information would not be used or kept after the interview analysis. To avoid individual or organisational identification the sample details indicated the broad type of role, colleges located in the south of England and would only refer to characteristics in terms of broad inspection categories, which could be applied more generally.

References to publicly available documents in relation to aspects such as Ofsted inspection reports and college websites, were agreed to be anonymised to restrict specific identification and recognition of individual leaders within colleges or the colleges themselves. Unlike private documents, the documentation used was that produced to be available for public use and therefore consent was not required if referenced, (BERA, 2018). In terms of policy, since there was more than one national body involved in this area similar considerations applied. The participants in this situation acknowledged that if their national roles could not permit absolute anonymity, they still agreed to participate on the basis indicated above. In the case of one participant she explicitly acknowledged the national body being identified where necessary as the detailed references would make it identifiable and the references were widely known.

### **Researcher positionality**

This section clarifies the position and experience of my own career in FE, which covered the college pre-incorporation period and the first 4 years of leading in corporate colleges, after which I worked in association with the FE sector, as a consultant, teacher trainer and researcher. It explains the relationships between those participants sharing their professional life-histories with myself in my role as a researcher. During the research process of using a professional life-history approach to researching leaders and managers I offered to interviewees a brief indication of this FE leadership and management experience, in recognition of an intended encouragement towards a collaborative research relationship. The research process involved an element of mutual construction of understandings and professional trust, which narrative commentators consider to be important in eliciting deep reflection in such a dialogue (Morrill, 2007; Cortazzi, 1993). As discussed in the section in this chapter on ethics, there are sensitivities involved in this approach which could also have involved power issues. However, a key focus of this research was to share and compare

experience across different leadership contexts in FE, rather than to assume a dominant model of practice across such a diverse sector.

Whilst my position as a researcher was not as an insider, as defined by Floyd and Arthur (2012) as being a current or previous FE practitioner in the institutions in which the interviewees had been FE leaders and managers, neither was I an entirely 'neutral broker' as exemplified by Elliott (1998). My professional experience directly in FE colleges over a period of 20 years meant that I understood the general sector climate, especially of staffing conditions and college strategic considerations, but recognised the widely differing views and political and professional values that were involved in colleges. I had a research interest in the later incorporation period but less direct involvement of the detail by then; for those perceptions I relied heavily on the co-operation of my participants. Having had college, national and regional roles in FE I had some other experience of early post-incorporation FE colleges and I had a good but historic overall understanding of the sector. Following work in business administration, my FE teaching career involved working in and with pre and post incorporated FE colleges, as a lecturer, middle manager in college adult and youth education and as a senior manager as an assistant principal. In leading regional FE projects and a national development network, which operated via a professional peer collaborative approach, I had some but less direct experience with other colleges more widely. My own senior leadership and management experience in FE covered the early incorporation period, ending a decade before my current research began, at which point my professional status at the time of the research was as an academic manager in higher education. My experience as a lecturer in a number of colleges, small to large in size, included general FE and FE/HE. Later in my career during the FE incorporated period researched I had experience of a number of other colleges as a freelance consultant then an HE employed trainer in the area of FE teacher training and management training. I retained a background research interest in the sector, with some informal peer contact with FE staff as well as offering presentations on proposed research via FE peer networks. Whilst this provided some background understanding and suggested scope to probe some FE experiences, encourage trust and supported some professional credibility, it was necessary to ensure that interviewees were not unduly influenced in their own construction of perceptions in my use of a life history methodology. Since the expectation of narrative approaches is that the narrative proceeds largely without interruption in order to elicit the unique factors and perceptions of an individual, this suggested a need for 'minimum direction which creates a personal axis' (Miller, 2005, p.114). Therefore, prompts were used very selectively but also where the individual interviewee asked for comment.

Since I had not worked in FE in the leaders' colleges concerned, dual leader/manager/researcher power issues did not apply to the professional life history situation (BERA, 2018). Thus, there were not known 'power' issues in this respect which

might have affected responses. There was limited scope for power factors to influence the interviews since both middle and senior managers recognised my own comparable experience as a peer professional, which encouraged them to share theirs. However, a sense of Jameson's (2010) two-way trust and 'open and consensual dialogue' was facilitated and space created in an attempt to avoid the minority situation she had found in FE, where staff felt inhibited to speak out. There was perhaps a risk that some sector shared experience might encourage participants to offer responses they felt were expected, which could only be tempered by prompts emphasising understanding rather than judgement and avoiding leading questions (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2002).

My historic professional experience was discussed with participants so that they were aware of the need to explain the contemporary context of their FE college environment during their narrative and this enabled me to follow up some aspects with them. Although Ravitch (2014) is more directly focussed on student and teacher practice-based research, she reinforces the ideas of researcher positionality affecting research in terms of creating dialogue and sharing ideas around decision making and judgement through contexts and stories. However, as Bourke (2014) observes, in his reflection on positional research roles, positionality both shapes and is shaped by ones' participants. The documentary discourse is seen initially via authors perceptions but is also interpreted via one's own and participants experience. Thus, the subjectivity involved may be considerable and can affect the form and presentation of the initial research questions but also offers opportunities to delve into lived experience and provide a voice from different historical perspectives.

### **Summary of the research design rationale**

Rather than attempting to compare public documentary material with that of private documents, such as diaries and any internal documentation kept during the relevant period, (which would have had limited historic availability), an oral history narrative approach via professional life histories was used. This offered scope for detailed perceptions, albeit with the limitations of individual recollection and reflection at a later date, such as re-construction and re-organisation of memory of prior experience (Cortazzi, 1993).

In the context of FE historical watersheds and FE sector structural periodisation, the significance of the relationship between individual and public perspectives becomes apparent. As observed by Miller (2005, p.114) 'Given their heads most life history interviewees will gravitate directly to the times of the greatest changes in their lives' [offering] 'a striking juxtaposition of the personal and the public'. This is echoed by Alheit (1992) by the notion of 'layering' of biographical detail, values and policy influences used to build up personal, professional, historical and policy affinities. Public historical documentation offers collective insights, which are themselves in turn the result of multiple

realities. However, individual biographical narratives create more specific, and a wider range, of the multiplicity of their own realities. Analysis needed to go beyond conventional thematic coding to include the more active listening stage to compare the subtleties of different contexts as well as unique ‘individual moments’ (McCormack, 2004). The purpose was also to evaluate the extent of broad perceptions which aligned or conflicted in CPD leadership terms and in relation to policy. Although linguistic analytical frameworks involving grammatical structures were not used directly, parts of that approach indirectly influenced elements of analysis of the narratives in this study. For example, the identification of particular descriptive language helped to understand a sense of leader emphases and roles within the context of the staff they worked with, as perceived by these leaders, and to cast light on the influence of their experience and significant professional values.

The overall purpose of a consideration of both documentary policy and life history narratives was to identify the most significant themes in each case, and the extent of the alignment of assumptions within policy, with the approaches of individual leaders to professional development. The overall form of analysis is therefore based on this combination of elements of narrative and historical approaches.

In this study there was not a particular concern with analysing professional career trajectories per se, as is the focus of such studies as that by Floyd (2009). However, career development issues impinge on leaders’ own professional development and that of their team, as do identity studies. There is a greater focus in this thesis on the dimension of different professional life history experiences and roles of leaders and the ways in which these influence CPD leadership. There is potential to see ways in which a combination of occupational, professional and personal values may be particularly influential on professional leadership. Within the broader category of ‘Life writing’, English (2008, pp.180-183) conceptualises a theoretical spectrum of forms of lived experience varying in detail, period and specificity within the life studied. Chamberlayne et al. (2004) distinguish ‘life history’ as focusing more on what is said but ‘life story’, on how it is constructed and notes the importance of some aspects being developed and some left as gaps. Although these elements can be evident in documentation a life writing approach is particularly relevant when the leaders do not mention a specific policy as being important to them, but emphasise its impact or implementation in practice. Whilst it is possible to identify some universal roles in stories also it is necessary to consider analysis as a chain of events, and as themes across life history narratives (Clandinin, 2013; McCormack, 2004). In this research these narrative issues within documentation can specifically be related to policy developments and recalled within that individual’s own professional development, leadership experiences and associations. The professional life histories represent complex realities and interrelationships between the personal, organisational and policy contexts, but

are seen via reflection and situated interpretation. The methodological basis of analysis involved a need to extract each of these elements whilst also recognising the extent to which the constructions and meanings are interrelated.

The methodological design approach overall was designed to elicit values and identities behind the construction of leadership approaches and their relation to policy. Specifically, it was concerned with how leaders' thinking was affected by different influences in determining what constituted CPD, and how to go about leading professional development in the particular circumstances of the staff teams they were working with. In doing so, there was evaluation of different approaches to professional life history data integrated with that arising from historical policy documentation.

An underlying aspect of the research was to identify values applied to professional leadership and to understand what significant areas and levels of influence were suggested. Life history narratives are recognised by Cortazzi (2002) as including statements which may be unconsciously foregrounded and therefore needed to be identified from within the wider narratives in terms of emphasis and repetition. Lumby and English, (2013) also suggest that leadership practice might be seen within the influence of parameters of visible and conscious faces and invisible, unconscious layers which emerge within the process of reflection. Neither are necessarily explicitly expressed in the reflections, but they can be inferred from the way in which leaders' express reflections on their performance as well as from descriptive recall of stories from the years of incorporation. In this research I was seeking *both* implicit and explicit meanings from the constructed reflections and overt statements. In aligning the relationship between individual contexts and leader experience with the significance of policy documentary periods and foci, there was an expectation of some commonalities and differences in patterns of situated meaning in different college contexts. Few initial assumptions about the relative position overall of the influence of educational versus business values and influences, were proposed, in relation to how leaders and managers responded to incorporation, in view of the diversity of the individual contexts.

This chapter has offered an overview of the epistemological and methodological approaches used in this thesis, to provide an explanation and justification for the methods used, to achieve a myriad of historic insights into CPD, from both narrative and documentary approaches. The overall approach to the methodological design was intended to identify broad influences on professional development leadership, both cross-college and across different internal college units. In so doing, it aimed to identify, although not to pursue in detail, what within the entire potential range of CPD means and models, were used in their leaders' own professional contexts. Unlike models as developed by Stoll (2013), or Blackmore et al. (2003), the aim in this research was not to review specific staff development critical incidents or create overall models of professional development.

Rather it was to understand the justification of leaders' individual selection of CPD approaches.

What was being sought were the overarching constructions of trajectories of CPD leadership, both in documentary sources and interview data. These were informed respectively by the political discourse and identification implicitly and explicitly as presented in the individual accounts. The focus is on the relationship between what different types of data offer, in explaining the complexity and development of interrelated ideological influences (Brannen, 2005). These influences could range from college reputation or survival to contract issues and individual experience as well as to policy directly.

My intention in terms of 'discourse' is to aim to identify the respective broad historical discourses, within key policy documents and in relation to those issues which arise as key themes in the individual narrative data. Historically pre and post incorporation values and understandings are overlaid by the divisions relating to FE structural provision. The vocational versus academic division, may be layered by adult 'recreational/leisure/lifelong learning', general educational, basic and functional skills and training provision; all of which are explored via the different leaders' experience of their unit context. The choice of individual leaders aimed to illustrate differential views and professional values; to include both those which may originate from pedagogic educational values, and those focused on business orientated strategic assumptions and to consider the extent to which these may be balanced. The methodology offered potential to emphasise the variety - both historical and contextual - as well as commonality across organisational roles and individual leadership contexts.

The approach to the design in relation to the research questions, via constructions, both of historical documentation and professional histories, recognise that whilst the reconstruction of both lag behind the action, the evidence was prompted and informed by the contemporary historical event to which it relates (Miller, 2005). The first research question, on the scope of CPD and its leadership, was designed to be investigated primarily within the professional life history method. The second question, on the relationship between individual and policy influences, was investigated via the assumptions within interview reflections and those within the policy documents. The third question on agency, accountabilities and the underlying identities and values was intentionally left open-ended in the narrative conversations, for myself as a more detached researcher to interpret from the perspectives offered. The view of agency compared to accountabilities from a policy viewpoint was elicited from both the life histories and the policy documentation.



Overall, the design allowed for identification of perceptions via public and individual perspectives and reflections. The narrative professional life history approach is used in tandem with the documentary material, in order to offer different constructed insights from the underlying policy direction and individual leader values, which inform professional development leadership and management. This links the unique and 'unofficial' experience to the wider 'official' public stories 'to explore the definitional contours of the policy' and evaluates the link between 'superficial stories and back stories' (McSpadden McNeil and Coppella, 2006, p.681).

The next chapter, chapter 4, is concerned with developing the policy perspective and narrative from both the historical documentary material and its associated literature. In doing so, it also takes forward some of the issues raised in chapter 2 in relation to CPD leadership, and adopts a primarily chronological structure to consideration of key documents and bodies which relate to policy and historical development of CPD over the corporate FE period.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **POLICY EVOLUTION OF FURTHER EDUCATION AND CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter is concerned with the historical narrative from a public documentary perspective on post-incorporation continuing professional development (CPD) policy and the implications for leadership in further education (FE) colleges of policy. It is recognised that these perceptions are expressed both implicitly and explicitly within key documents, which relate to or have direct reference to CPD, and exert an influence directly or indirectly on the individual leaders' ideas and practice of CPD. The perceptions of leaders and managers are analysed through professional life histories in subsequent chapters and related back to policy from two perspectives. Firstly, that of the underlying sector issues, themes and foci within policy which affected not only college corporations organisationally, but also how CPD is prioritised, informed, led and influenced. Secondly, some policy documentation specifically relates to CPD issues, funding and practice and this not only directs the policy purpose nationally but also, at arms' length, is mediated and implemented by college leaders. Of my main research questions, the documentary evaluation particularly offers insights into: what policy commentators see as CPD priorities; how far educational and business influences are respectively involved and how regulatory accountability and professional agency is recognised.

Some reference to aspects of key policy, in relation to FE structures and associated accountabilities for college leadership and management of FE CPD, was made in chapter 2, and the methodological implications developed in chapter 3. A more detailed evaluation of the state-initiated or informed 'official' policy narrative is analysed in this current chapter. Chapters 2 to 6 are seen within the context of their contribution to understanding both wider and individual influences and approaches to CPD leadership in colleges.

Drawing on McCulloch (2004), this current chapter, in analysing public historical documents over the incorporated period, is intended to determine their relevance in terms of the origin, purpose, authorship and evidence base arising for college CPD development. Appendix 1 is intended to put the specific documents evaluated in this chapter in the broader policy context of the period. This highlights the extent to which different stages in policy development placed a more direct focus on CPD and its leadership and which background policy factors impinged upon it. In historical documentary terms some texts contain explicit references to CPD, but others reveal unwittingly assumptions of significant emphases and influences, in their use of particular terms and unexpected omission. Policy change is put within the context of FE corporate wider policy literature so that the life history data can be

considered within the conceptual debates of the policy framework in subsequent chapters and in particular its funding, managerial and leadership consequences.

Although national policy is translated, applied, mediated and interpreted by leaders within corporate colleges, it is evident from the literature that the way in which there is college leader and manager interaction with policy is variable. In departmental units within a college there may be further differentiation but this has been less extensively evidenced. Coffield et al. (2007) argues that within ecologies of practice, the relationship between national policy levers and local college prioritisation can be somewhat distanced from the local expertise and values of leaders. Assumptions behind policy are mediated through the layers of policy implementation, but relative priorities, between those of the individual professional and those distilled into policy documents, is less closely considered in the literature.

From an FE sector documentary view and in much of the CPD literature reviewed in chapter 2, some of the policy influences relating to CPD leadership and management directly may more closely align to the needs of the whole sector, an entire college, or the individual leader of CPD. It is clear that some agency and judgement can be applied by leaders in considering how to lead CPD, but the level of freedom to exercise these concepts after incorporation is widely contested. The potential structural and accountability limitations, to intended implementation of policy recommendations, is frequently alluded to in the literature and reports. For example. Under the Labour and Coalition governments, who sponsored key reports such as those led by Foster (2005), Kennedy (1997) and Fryer (1997) as well as in the Lingfield (2012) report.

However, college corporate agency can allow for some differential interpretations and application of policy by college leaders, at different levels of strategic and operational leadership and management. This suggests a much more complex relationship between policy and leadership practice in the field of professional development, than the official documentary policy discourse alone may suggest, especially since much is presented as if it is of equal relevance to different groups of staff in FE, except in documentation where college size and mergers suggested a need for scale economies (Payne, 2008).

### **Historical policy periodisation**

The boundaries of the main concentration on the periodization of policy documentation considered, were taken in this research primarily as the first two decades of corporate FE comprising 1992 to 2010. The period to 2010 reflects the start of the period of interviews of leader's professional life history reflections. Notions of historical periodisation may normally preclude much consideration of prior and ongoing influences but it was necessary to offer for context and comparison some indication of the trajectory of FE developments

and activity, so an updating postscript is included with some reference to relevant pre-incorporation context. The reflection on the subsequent decade relates to those research participants reflections which span the entire incorporation period, and significant further CPD developments. (See Appendix 1 for a chronology of government policy strategy documents, key sector structural changes and policy documents).

Some historical periodisation in terms of policy is necessary. in terms of different governments' ideologies and strategies. Whilst there are some enduring threads across governments in terms of market skill development and accountability mechanisms, the balance of specific intended outcomes of policy varies by government. Themes crossing the periods indicated are considered in broad policy and historical terms, but the periods do represent distinctive broad thrusts of structural policy change, the overall perceived purposes of the FE sector during those periods and the effects on specific CPD activity.

Therefore, documentation is primarily considered within the following periods of its production under the respective UK government, although it is noted where a theme is directly linked to the immediate prior or subsequent governmental period. Under the Key Documents section this chapter is mostly structured chronologically through single specific documents except for two key professional development bodies; those of FENTO (the further education national training organisation) and IfL (the Institute for Learning), who had wider roles, are dealt with across the period of their influence. To put the policy in context, this introduction now outlines the respective periods of government which represent the main changes of direction which affected staff in colleges and CPD responsibilities. These are represented as: 1992-1996; 1997-2010; 2010-2015 and 2016 onwards.

### ***1992-1996 Corporate staffing and CPD responsibilities***

The pre-incorporation context is relevant here in that the arrangements for CPD afterwards were significantly different. Prior to incorporation in 1993 there had existed some explicit external control and resourcing of staff professional development via local authorities. The development of staff had primarily been directed and supported prior to 1993 by local education authorities (LEAs), partly via some national ring-fenced educational funding priority resource. In addition, resources had been sometimes available for industrial and commercial staff secondments and from externally funded projects via the LEAs, European social funds (ESF) or other community or industrial sources. Whilst practices in this area differed post-incorporation, often for historical reasons initially, colleges largely perpetuated staff development processes of pre-incorporated colleges at first, as national policy did not specify initially, responsibilities and accountabilities in this area (Castling, 1996). An amount to represent pre-incorporated central funding for specific areas of CPD had been included within corporate college budgets post 1992 but was not ring-fenced and responsibility for overall budgetary staffing capacity was that of the college, who reported

in college strategic plans to the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC Circular, 1992/18).

Therefore, the framework for FE CPD used by leaders and managers began as being broadly in line with pre-corporate principles such as those based on 1980s LEA policy. This involved guidance which, although targeted at LEA FE officers and advisers, through which national priority staff development grants had previously flowed, was intended to also inform directly the individual colleges' approaches (FEU, 1987). These basic principles of identifying and prioritising staff need and allocating CPD resources were little different initially than before incorporation, but without either national priority funding nor accountability to LEAs objectives. So, the immediate change from 1992 moves the leadership and management role of CPD to the discretion of corporations; organisational agency for CPD is enhanced theoretically but becomes dependent on their prioritisation, which initially lay in immediate business and financial priorities. This situation remained until the FEFC Standards Fund for quality improvement included specific support for part-time staff, mentoring and vocational updating (FEFC, 2000).

The Conservative government of this early incorporated period largely inherited the philosophy of the previous, also conservative, government. This sought to apply a more market orientated and business efficiency focus to colleges, and reduce the influence of local authorities within their area. This was a government policy intent across more than educational sectors. New national further education funding council (FEFC) methodologies were followed by professional development reports and changes in 1995 and 1996 but the main focus lay on a need for colleges to respond to financial, survival needs in the new corporate sector.

The Further and Higher Education Act of 1992 had changed not only structures but also led to other changes to cultures and ways of working. These involved a perceived move from broad concepts of staff and educational professional development, evolving towards a greater focus on human resource-based training involving corporate capacity needs (Gleeson, 2014). Given its very low profile and lack of prioritisation in the early incorporated period, there is limited policy evaluation in the CPD literature on the official documentation immediately after incorporation, although the 'freedoms' of corporate status compared to local authority control is much noted as a historical reference in later studies (Simmons, 2008; Avis, 2002).

Whilst the 1992 FHE Act determined corporate status, it only referred to the staff terms and conditions transfer to corporations, not the clear entitlement or means of ensuring CPD (FHE Act, 1992). Neither staff nor leaders in the sector immediately engaged fully with the consequences of this for changes in staff conditions given other pressures (Jupp, 2015). The CPD gap in both the legislation and the reports and practice, is of itself significant and the next specific reference concerns appraisal monitoring. This gap in the mainstream policy

documentation is not directly addressed until well after the first round of college inspection reports in 1994-1995, and became apparent in the first FEFC Annual Report on the subject in 1999. This revealed that of the 105 reports that far, the highest rate of a link of appraisal to staff development in colleges was just 43 instances (Betts, 1996, p.102).

Two years after the FHE (1992) Act, the FEFC policy (FEFC,1994) of holding back funding allocations, making them dependent on a colleges' progress towards more flexible staff contracts, had knock-on effects for CPD resourcing. This created a difficult climate for formal and informal professional development when new contracts, with less generous terms and conditions, increased workloads and decreased time available for development.

The issues for colleges in this period related primarily to legalities surrounding direct employment of staff and details of system progress by colleges, which were evaluated and recorded by private consultants for the FEFC by Coopers and Lybrand Deloitte (1992). The few references to staff in their consultancy documentation concentrated on cost, or technical development of business administrative staff. Although it was expected that general in-service training for academic staff would continue, it was made clear by Castling (1996) that it would need to be supplemented by training around the understanding and technicalities of accountability under incorporation.

#### ***1997-2010 Changing policy priorities and FE structures***

This period includes more specific policy documents relating to policy changes for CPD. It saw the final handover in 2001 from the FEFC to the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), who acquired funding responsibility for a new complex combined structure of lifelong learning and skills providers. The status of the skills agenda was raised along with the strategic role for the LSC for the new sector (Coffield et al., 2007). The ongoing significance of these structural changes was considerable. Under the new Labour government from 1997 the market/employment skills agenda for increased productivity, remained an underlying thread in policy and encouraged college support for CPD skill development.

However, the addition of social justice and widening participation agendas created potential tensions between all these priorities, compounded by limited take-up of skills training, in that employers could potentially achieve productivity by other means than skill development (Avis, 2009). A significant theme of the Labour government period was an encouragement towards co-operation and partnership, included in the Green Paper, 'The Learning Age', which proposed a vision for lifelong learning although part-time adult education actually reduced under Labour (Unwin, 2010).

For CPD the most significant developments, were in the 2002 government strategy document, 'Success for All' subtitled 'Reforming Further Education and Training Our Vision for the Future' (DfES, 2002). In the same year the Institute for Learning (IfL) was

created as a professional and regulatory body for FE staff, set up and funded by government but also responsible to its members. By 2003 each provider had targets to achieve, which included minimum percentages of teachers with professional qualifications and the establishment of local partnership bodies (Coffield, 2005), but the LSC structure to monitor this proved very complex. Under the government regulations (DIUS, 2007) which made CPD in FE mandatory and recordable, FE teachers were nominally responsible for their own CPD but they were required to record and report it to the IfL.

The Apprenticeship, Skills, Children and Learning Act (ASCL) of 2009, set apprenticeships on a legal basis and specified the on-the-job training element. This Act dissolved the Learning and Skills Council (ASCL, 2009, s.123) and led to the establishment in 2010 of the Skills Funding Agency and the Young People's Learning Agency. The 2009 Act also established Ofqual as a qualification regulator. In the context of college performance tables, Jones (2011, p.3) argues that qualifications could be seen as having 'currency value' with a tendency for colleges to play the market, regardless of wider educational concerns. This could encourage staff appraisal closely linked to performativity in relation to specific student outcomes.

#### ***2010 to 2015 Change, challenge and reform under the Coalition***

Further structural change led to responsibility for central funding for FE passing to the Education Funding Agency (EFA) in 2012 and subsequently by 2017 to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). The coalition government had structurally split responsibilities for 14-19-year-old funding provision between two government departments: DBIS for 19+ vocational education and training but the DfE for 14-19, splitting FE's core functional areas. The FE strategy focus was within the context of yet another phase of FE government reform. This was published as 'New Challenges, New Chances: Next Steps in Implementing the FE Reform Programme' (DBIS, 2011).

The movement of responsibility for any CPD strategy and central support was ongoing. By 2011 it had been apparent to the government that the levels of required membership and CPD submission to the IfL were far below that required. The outcome of the government review in the Lingfield Report (2012) was to see the demise of the IfL in its regulatory capacity, and the move of its remaining responsibilities, including those relating to CPD to the Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS), then to the FE Guild and subsequently to the Education and Training Foundation (ETF). CPD reverted to a responsibility of individual college corporations. College funding was cut and reallocated to apprenticeships although government expected co-funding from employers or the individual, despite in practice limited take-up (Fleckenstein and Lee, 2018). Colleges were also challenged by specialised private trainers in this area.

### ***2016 onwards***

From subsequent Conservative governments of 2015 and 2016, there was further change for the further education, learning and skills providers, including colleges. Government funding agencies were combined in 2017 as the Education and Skills and Funding Agency, within the Department for Education, and with responsibility for 5-19-year olds and adult provision. The effect of these changes and an enhanced strategic role for local authorities was an increased focus on strategic collaboration between colleges and other providers, and Area Reviews of 16-19-year-old provision involving further reorganisations and amalgamations. The scope and effect of these reviews, (originally planned for after the Learning and Skills Act (2000) but not fully implemented until 2017), is as outlined in chapter 1. Hodgson et al. (2015) and Keep (2019) hoped that they would lead to greater collaboration and mutual professional learning between providers, rather than competition between providers but the longer-term effect of Area Reviews is yet to be fully researched.

For colleges their CPD strategy had to balance the skills agenda with that of academic and vocational provision for young people, with what Nash and Jones (2015, p.40) refer to as the historic ‘political football’ of adult and community education resource. Hodgson and Spours (2015, p.209) in this policy context, suggested that there is potential for a wider concept of professionalism as ‘triple professionalism’, in making use of collaborative projects, research and development, involving greater partnership for professional learning and communities of practice, along with vocational, occupational and teaching and learning development. Although Greatbatch and Tate (2018), in their FE report for the DfE, suggest collaborative CPD is valued by teachers, they suggest that the current scope is relatively limited in practice, as leaders still view access for part-time staff, lack of funding and the process of CPD prioritisation to be challenges.

### **Policy change and CPD**

Over the incorporated period CPD moves from a ‘staff development’ concern, to one where human resource and organisationally important accountabilities became more important in college capacity terms. Avis (2002) recognised the low status of staff development officers in FE and of them being of minor significance in the process of corporate change and innovation. CPD slowly evolved into one of professional development within policy, and its link to quality being seen as a more important part of the sector’s reputational status, but as its contribution to college business target achievement and outcome objectives against performance (Castling, 1996; DBIS, 2008).

Across the documentary data over the incorporated period a series of themes for FE colleges became more prominent considerations and influences. These included funding levels, the disruptive consequences for CPD priorities within serial structural change and the diversity



of both staff and leaders' roles, including the effect of different values, histories and cultures both within governments and across and within FE colleges. The extent of the changing foci and the impact on CPD varied considerably across the entire college incorporated period under consideration, but some common threads of influence can be seen across the documents considered.

The analysis in this chapter aims to draw out the implications for CPD development of an environment of ongoing change, involving strategic 'business-like approaches to management', market competition or collaboration and funding accountabilities (Hannagan, 2006, p.325). The turbulence created by ongoing funding policy change did not allow for settled long-term CPD strategies but needed to respond to short term priorities and changing circumstances for colleges. The different histories and cultures of college units as well as cultural differences between FE and the HE, especially for FE teachers delivering HE in FE colleges, also impacted on CPD activity and are analysed in chapters 5 and 6. However, the issue of overall college sustainability and stability, which college governing bodies remained responsible for, continued to be a CPD issue through to the end of the period and affected CPD potential (Graystone et al., 2015). The changing positions of colleges, often as a result of the increasing level of amalgamations, restructuring and a gradually increasing policy emphasis on CPD, along with high staff turnover, affected the way in which CPD leadership could be enacted. The significance of many aspects of ongoing change for the sector and its colleges is of direct relevance to its impact on the need for CPD leadership to keep pace with both a business organisational culture, and that involving a response to traditional pedagogic curriculum development needs.

### ***FE Funding***

Funding and financial sustainability exercised a significant influence on management and leadership in colleges. Over the entire corporate period, funding changed from that provided and controlled via Local Authorities, to that of virtually all college funding via the FEFC, then from the LSC and then from the education and skills funding agencies, each with their own methodologies. It was possible with corporate status for colleges to develop subsidiary funding streams to augment income, via sub-letting, franchising, increasing fee income and other business income generating means (Fletcher et al., 2015). Although colleges relied on common public funding criteria, LEAs had previously used a variety of course-based teaching cost criterion. However, new funding methodologies were more sophisticated and common to all colleges (for example, FEFC, Circular 1993/32). Colleges could exercise more cost-centre control options and virement using their own corporate agency but within overall business viability. After 2000 funding rules had to apply across a larger and even more diverse sector.

### ***Policy values***

In terms of values, the sector moved from a historic pre-incorporation heritage of a public service dominant values discourse, albeit with vocational versus academic distinctions, to a policy discourse that was more closely associated with business models, which directly impacted on resource management. Whilst the early conservative emphasis in the political literature and documentation was on the effects of competitive funding criteria and market considerations, this later moved to more government encouragement for collaboration. Under the Labour government's economic skills-based education and training agenda, policy became more closely linked to social justice values in policy documents such as the Kennedy (1997) and Fryer (1997) reports on widening participation, lifelong and adult learning. College leaders' perceptions and values in FE in relation to CPD implications, were expected to have been influenced by policy levers as well as their own personal professional values. The extent of change, integration or separation of value-based leadership is an issue explored in the professional life history-based chapters 5 and 6.

### ***Staff diversity***

Not only did colleges have to cope with a significant and ongoing pace of structural change but also that relating to teaching and learning roles and staff turnover. The range of college staff from that of instructor, learning supporter or workshop facilitators limited perceptions of a common notion of professionalism amongst teaching staff (Levačić and Glatter 1997; Robson, 1996). This characteristic of a diverse college staff, is compounded after the FE sector becomes the lifelong learning and skills sector (LLSC) in 2000, as it then involved closer co-operation with those within functionally different teaching, training and support roles across the sector (Learning and Skills Act, 2000). However, for all staff there was the impact, at various levels and during a series of different periods of post-incorporation, of specific policy steers and levers in relation to business organisation, funding, targets, initiatives, planning structures and inspection (Steer et al., 2007). Alongside this there remained traditional teacher training development needs, both initial and in-service, as well as CPD needs relating to ongoing updating of these pedagogic skills and those relating to subject, vocational and occupational needs as well as expectations of individual and career development.

The relationship between policy and leadership is overlaid by the potential tensions or reconciliation between different leadership roles and values within the diversity of general FE colleges. This could involve responses to the pedagogic, vocational or academic professional identities and professional cultures within the leaders' teams. Changing and restructured management roles within colleges may in turn be influenced by the national policy target setting accountability requirements, and the link to business financial survival. Increased regulation by the state can be challenged to some extent by college leaders and

this is where a consideration of the balance between education and business values is necessary (Lucas and Nasta, 2010).

In the next section of this chapter individual documents are evaluated, following the chronological official, public narrative of the development of FE policy, through linked reports and legislation. The documents considered were sponsored or initiated by the government of the day or its agencies, but the changing governments over the incorporated period reveal ideological changes of emphasis. The research is concerned with the most significant reports and associated literature in relation to their implications for FE CPD, so that these can be compared in a historical chronological way, to the leaders' reflective accounts within the same periods. However, some of the documents had a direct focus and impact on CPD whilst others, such as those on funding and some strategy documents had an important but sometimes indirect effect on this aspect of leadership. This chapter also aims to expand and develop issues from the literature relating to FE CPD policy, its implications and associated underlying concepts which were introduced in chapter 2.

### **Key Documentary Influences**

In the early 1990s, apart from reference to the contract disputes, there had been relatively little documentary evidence of a substantial policy concern with CPD originating from government or its FE quangos. For example, it was not until 1995 that a report led by FEDA, (combining the previous FE Staff College and the Further Education Unit), was published and involved mapping of the diverse staff roles within the FE sector. The first commissioned national report on professional development produced by the Inspectorate for the FEFC did not follow until 1999. These documents contributed to the somewhat sparse evidence base in this area and had a particular focus on funding, quality, qualifications and some, limited statistical data in relation to professionalisation in the FE sector.

This section of the chapter reviews what have been evaluated as key CPD policy documents with a focus on CPD or the background implications for CPD leadership as well as the conceptual development of associated themes to offer a historiographical account. In the choice of specific documents considered in this section of the chapter, there is reference to the explicit and implicit CPD intentions and these are put within the broader FE context. In appendix 1, which offers an overall documentary chronology of the period, documents which are specifically considered in this chapter are highlighted.

In many cases, the literature reinforces the concept of leading professional development as being interconnected with ideas of self-agency, organisational strategies and policy funding boundaries. It also deals with the range of associated accountabilities linked to the policy. All are seen within different areas of the literature as part of various influencing mixes,

along with individual and state perceived professional values, notions of professionalism and its relationship to CPD.

The most significant official documents selected for consideration were determined initially from the CPD literature search outlined in chapter 2. Further selection was followed through via FE legislation, associated national agency reports and major documentary structural and funding body policy references, but also back subsequently via the emergence within the professional narrative data of references to policy themes which were perceived to be of particular significance to individual leaders.

Whilst the profile of FE professional standards was gradually raised, CPD became intertwined with broader issues of professionalism, FE structural organisation and teaching qualifications and development. Alongside these, during the new Labour administration there was a developing focus on standards, partnerships and cooperation, rather than competition and a widening participation agenda. By the period which included the Kennedy and the Fryer reports in 1997, the Foster report in 2005 and the coalition governments' Lingfield report in 2012, the focus moved onto ideas more closely associated with the future role of the CPD in colleges, such as professionalism and the 2007 CPD recording issue.

However, all these reports shared some similar themes and influenced subsequent government CPD strategies for the sector. Through the period under consideration, government sector policy reviews led ultimately to major lifelong learning sectoral restructuring for corporate FE colleges into the new wider learning and skills sector. There were periods of centralisation of CPD policy followed after 2012 by periods of decentralisation.

Although the development of the trajectory of reports and government documentation is recognised by their arrangement chronologically in this section, the thematic relevance in this research crosses the policy periods and the leaders' own professional life periods, pre- and post-incorporation. The wider significance beyond the year of their documentary publications, in the case of FENTO and the IFL, has been highlighted by dealing with this material within the span of the periods of their relevance to CPD, dating from their origin. Each document is considered in terms of its authorship, its declared intent and potential bias and its significance for CPD in colleges.

#### ***FEDA report 'Mapping the FE Sector' (1995)***

This report was published at a very low-profile point nationally for FE CPD and one at which staffing data for incorporated colleges was both limited and incomplete. However, it did begin to pave the way for consideration of professional standards and was part of the

tentative progress towards national bodies taking the whole staffing area forward for and to some extent in discussion with the sector.

Prior to the significant 1997 reports, it was necessary for government to attempt to gain some coherent picture of the range of staff professional roles over such a diverse sector which it set out to do, via the 1995 mapping project. This Conservative government commissioned report on sector mapping was initially prepared by private consultants, Prime Research, a research and development company, with a brief to produce occupational and functional mapping of the further education sector. The report reiterated the issues of sector diversity challenges in terms of FE professional roles. The project was a response to a concern of the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) about the lack of reliable data about staff roles and functions. This was recognised as a limitation for the basis for national development policy for the sector and professional development. FEDA, whose role was partially funded by government, also produced a summary response to the report, although they claimed that the views expressed in it were those of themselves as FEDA authors, rather than the DfEE. The significance of the report lay in its emphasis on college staff diversity and fed into issues such as the FE standards developments via FENTO and the IfL. FENTO later developed functional professional standards intended to form a background to further qualification and CPD developments and legislation to enforce professional standards and the recording of CPD by individual staff. This led to a process of FE staff compulsory membership of IfL which was intended to be a professional body for the staff of the entire further education and training sector.

Meanwhile, the FEDA managed report and the associated summary had the wide remit to establish the scale of employees in the sector to include not only those working in colleges but also the voluntary sector and those in prison education. This multi-layered brief and the lack of available sector statistics on total student and staff numbers, rendered impractical the declared intentions of the project to provide a comprehensive picture of the sector in terms of size, staff employment, potential professional development needs or workforce patterns (FEDA, 1995). Over 80 different job titles, (listed within 23 categories), were identified, reflecting staff diversity and the complexity of roles. In particular the needs of part-time staff received little attention. Unsurprisingly, there was a limited match to existing standards across the range and complexity of roles within FE, and structural changes and the purpose for which statistics had originally been collected limited the scope of the task (FEDA, 1995). Gleeson et al. (2005) had observed that the proliferation of job titles resulted in a range of para-professionals alongside lecturers and included those of trainer, work-based assessor, key-skills coordinator, section leader, progress tutor and advanced practitioner. This created blurred professional boundaries in terms of leadership. The least amount of data available related to those staff who were part-time, volunteers and those in support roles. The most growth in staff occupational groups lay in the area associated with

funding, human resources (HR), estates, governance, quality, marketing and teaching and learning support. The implications for business orientated training, curriculum development and individual CPD suggested a complexity and balance for both the colleges and their respective teams for which middle managers were often mostly responsible.

Whilst FEFC did collect college staff data via the staff individualised record (SIR), the latter was incomplete and categorised differently, but showed that there were slightly more substantial part-time teaching and learning staff than there were full-time (FEFC 1994/07). Since even more part-time staff were employed for less than 25% pro-rata than were recorded and indirectly via agency or local authority employers, the total for part-time staff is assumed to be much higher. Qualification returns for teachers/lecturers included sixth-form college qualified teaching status and a range of initial and continuing professional development qualifications, from NVQ assessor to post-graduate awards. The FEDA report noted a category of 'staff development which is not accredited'; and more informal CPD activity was not detailed. In addition, the authors identified in 10 colleges some curriculum-based development activity but that staff development was increasingly linked to business strategic plans. Little was identifiable regarding the highest qualification level for those on small part-time contracts and in adult education, so any conclusions about total staff qualification levels were not reliable. FEDA, when it was restructured into the learning and skills development agency (LSDA), attempted to produce a functional map of role statements, based on 300 workshop participants but the result was based on fairly wide general categories.

Whilst some occupational areas themselves had drawn up a draft statement of values for their own training areas, it was noted that these would have needed further audit to be developed. Finally, occupational standards from national standards councils and industry training organisations, as well as existing National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs), were mapped by FEDA onto FE key roles grids as far as possible. Their analysis of this evidence suggests that applying these standards and qualification to the complex range of FE roles was challenging and of limited effect given the complexity and evidence bases (FEDA, 1995).

Consideration of this FEDA project review revealed not only the potential diversity for professional development planning within the FE sector, but the lack of reliable evidence on which to base any national standards. The scale of the development task for the sector as a whole, or even the ability to determine the overall size of the sector was limited. On the one hand it could suggest that corporations had exercised agency in determining their own different CPD policies and formal and informal means, but on the other it explains the lack of coherent national policies in this area, which affected ideas of sector professional status and recognition.

*FEDA and professional standards*

FEDA in 1995 claimed that functional standards were ‘based on underpinning values and ethics’ (FEDA, 1995, p.19). However, the only brief paragraph in their report outlining these values refer generically to a ‘Commitment to Lifelong Learning, Quality of Service and Equality of Opportunity’ with an aspiration that value statements would be added to the functional map later (FEDA, 1995, p.22).

There was a need for a body to take forward the determination of professional standards as the work of the FEDA (1995) mapping report was considered to be just a ‘snapshot’ and a ‘statistical starting point’, owing to the incomplete statistics available for colleges and the patchiness of these, particularly for the voluntary and private sectors (DfEE, 1995).

The development of professional standards for the sector can be traced through a series of agencies, from FENTO to the IfL and the subsequent bodies with this area of responsibility through the incorporated period. This sector diversity created ongoing challenges to attempts to create definitive standards for the sector. The role and functions of agencies involved with professional standards and CPD were neither continuous nor coherently followed through in terms of policy and practice. However, the question of standards did interact with the ongoing legislative changes from 2000 onwards, the enforcement of CPD in FE from 2007-2012 and the subsequent period of greater self-assessment of CPD for colleges.

The literature around this area of professional standards emphasised the point that the FEDA project was not only competence assessment-led but was concerned with absolute, pre-determined standards which had limited consideration of judgement issues in relation to staff and team needs (Elliott, 1996). Chown (1996) argues for the limitations of such an approach to professional development in terms of leadership via means of ‘autonomous pragmatism’ and for staff development to be led by existing professional associations.

Although by 1996 the government set up the Further Education Staff Development Forum (FESDF) to establish FE national teaching standards, by 1998 this body had been converted into the Further Education National Training Organisation (FENTO) to work in more detail towards the establishment of national standards and an independent membership professional body for the sector. The body in the form of the IfL was eventually established by 2002 by the Department for Education and Science (DfES). FENTO was by 2008 incorporated, (via a subsidiary standards verification body of a sector skills council), into Lifelong Learning UK limited. This role of the sector skills council had involved working with business, employers, inspectors, government departments and other associated bodies but was primarily advisory. The range of quangos, government departments, institutions and other bodies involved in FE, led to the charge of duplication as colleges sought to

respond to this plethora of bodies, which related to their work in leading and managing appropriate CPD for their occupational sector (Darling-Hammond and Richardson, 2009).

***The Kennedy ‘Learning Works’ and Fryer ‘Learning for the Twenty-First Century’ Reports (1997)***

The Kennedy and Fryer reports had a wider brief in relation to the sector than CPD but their proposals had consequences for the FE profession and fundamental values which underpinned social as well as economic skill development functions. Both reports highlighted the issues for learners and associated professional development and learning, especially for part-time staff.

Common features of these reports of Kennedy and Fryer include the way in which influences on the sector as a whole intersect with those on colleges. This intersection is traceable in the literature from Shain and Gleeson (1999), though to the concept of stakeholders in Gleeson and Keep (2004) and Coffield et al. (2007). It is identified not only as part of the ongoing complexity of change but in the context of central policy levers and drivers. The stakeholder concept involved as applied to influencing management, is developed by Stoney and Winstanley (2001), but the attention to stakeholders’ interests can also be seen in the context of professionalism in the FE context; as a moral objective for staff interests and values in terms of implementation of CPD policy. However, there are stake-holding compromises in both the creation and implementation of policy, as it involves a range of implementing contributors, and this can create a paradox between policy intent and policy consequences as Nudzor (2009) observed. This is illustrated in relation to adult education by Bradley (1996;1997) within his studies, which included an evaluation of intended and unintended policy consequences in relation to adult education.

The two reports of Kennedy and Fryer, are next considered in view of their policy relationship. Although broadly concerned with the shape, purpose and priorities within the sector, both offered a view about the roles further and adult education colleges and providers should fulfil. In doing so they emphasised some common policy priorities yet fulfilled their specific differentiated briefs as advisers to government and government funding bodies. They also made specific mention of elements of CPD and its leadership, and offered views on the ways in which business and professionally orientated values, affected the central underlying policy around college roles, social and economic priorities. The form and focus which college CPD leadership and activities takes, was expected to align, at least in part, to these priorities but the extent to which it did in practice is a question for the next chapters. Whereas Simmons (2008, p.365) argued that the effect of policy lead to a diminution of staff autonomy, circumstances, workload conditions, qualification requirements and ultimately status as a profession, he also reminds us that ‘the largest single item of



expenditure for colleges is staffing'. In terms of organisational capacity development and individual development, this factor remains an important one for both policy and practice especially where it affects performance.

*The Kennedy report (1997)*

The Kennedy report was directly concerned with widening learner participation policy in further education and was commissioned by the FEFC for reporting in 1997, at the beginning of the period of the labour government and towards the end of the FEFC period. It had a central focus on the funding methodology and strategies to not only increase, but in quality terms, to improve learner completion and achievement. Whilst its main focus lay in learner outcomes, it was based on economic, social public service, social equity and justice values, and in particular argued for the need to not focus too strongly on the former at the expense of the latter.

The evidence base of this report, which emanated from the FEFC's widening participation committee, included literature reviews as well as their own studies and evidence sessions. These covered under-represented student groups in the sector; national FE bodies, county councils, and an industry body. The committee comprised a majority of FE corporate and community education representative providers along with FEDA, the national institute for adult and continuing education (NIACE) and a training and enterprise council (TEC) representative plus two from industry.

The recommendations of the report are expressed in terms of business strategies for high profile promotion of what they termed learning products, to create a demand from non-learners, whether excluded in the community or at work. This was a particular interest of this report since Kennedy's background was as a human rights lawyer. She presented the case as one based on a 'sea-change in the public attitude to learning' which reached out to new learner markets (Kennedy, p.102). The idea of strategic partnerships of providers, along with information and guidance services and a greater use of technology, within a national strategy, was recommended to increase take-up.

Kennedy firmly placed the report in the political context of the funding investment needed to achieve the objectives at the forefront of policy. She recommended that the government not only harmonise systems across the entire FE sector but base them on the principles of equity and transparency. This clearly flagged the view that the current system, across FEFC, TECs, training and school sectors, did not achieve this and was unnecessarily complicated and inconsistent as well as discouraging widening participation.

Kennedy noted the implications for CPD in colleges of differentiated funding in recommending 'that teacher development activities [should be] aimed at training to meet the new challenges of wider participation in education' implying that this was not currently the case in 1997 (Kennedy, p.78). The report also observed that basic skills inspection

grades were declining, with insufficient support for inexperienced, unqualified specialist part-time staff.

Jameson and Hillier (2008, p.39) estimated that the 85000-staff working within FE and adult and community learning (ACL) were often 'not able to participate in CPD' or even team meetings, nor could they easily access informal meetings, contacts with colleagues, or resources on an everyday basis. Whilst Jameson and Hillier acknowledge that part-time staff were affected by policy, indirectly or directly, they viewed them as being 'situated on the 'outer edges' of LSC funded institutions and therefore not as bound in by the relentless targets' (p.43). The extent to which CPD leaders in this area felt their staff were affected by policy in practice is considered in chapters 5 and 6.

#### *The Fryer report (1997)*

The second key report of 1997 was the report led by Fryer (1997), for the National Advisory Group for Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning [NAGCELL]. The report shared many foci of attention with that of Kennedy. Concerned with adult learning the brief for Fryer included issues such as funding pressures, growth in student numbers and the relationship of these to developing quality of staff support, as well as economic and employability factors. Fryer worked with an advisory group across this broad brief, which included those involved in the wider range of adult education providers, from local authority adult education officers, academics for the, inspectors and NIACE.

Although there is much mention of employers' roles in supporting employee development, there is very little specific reference in the report to providers such as FE colleges and their contribution to developing their own professional staff. The focus on skills needed for the development of new technology is apparent but the report makes a distinction between development and qualifications. This aligns to wider distinctions between college organisational training development compared to individual professional development. The report commented specifically on the need for enhanced staff training and its relationship to wider notions of CPD. However, its main purpose was seen by its authors 'to turn the vision of a learning society into reality' (Fryer, 1997, p.1-2). The report aimed to offer proposals, based on a review of obstacles and initiatives to change, to change learning and professional cultures, and in so doing to change aspirations and identities. It focused on systematic learning, new technology as well as under-represented learners and clearly argued that there was a relative lack of focus in current planning. The criticisms of current organisations lay in what it presented as 'rigid departmentalism' and a concern with 'the interests of professionals' at the expense of a more equitable focus on the learner.

Fryer's order of prioritisation of the agencies involved placed local authorities in the lead with other skills training bodies such as TECs followed by colleges. Once again funding was a clear focus. The report noted that the review of the FEFC funding methodology should

be followed up to enhance opportunities for the widening participation agenda, set by Kennedy. Fryer argued that one means of doing so would be for government to introduce ‘rewards to institutions and staff who can clearly demonstrate their contribution to a national strategy’ (Fryer, p.71), making this another potential accountable target.

The importance of the Fryer report for CPD lay in its specific focus on investment in the adult area to achieve the outcome of a culture of lifelong learning expressed as:

‘Staff will need the highest order of skills to stimulate learning, support learning and engender the habits of lifelong learning amongst those whom they teach, guide and advise. Staff will need training in new ways of working, widening participation and making use of the new communication and information technologies. They will also need opportunities to be lifelong learners’ themselves’ (Fryer, 1997, p.79).

This reflects the idea of lifelong learning policy encompassing a vast range of learners within what became the restructured sector from 2000, so Fryer did not neglect the implications for an expanded sector part-time workforce, including targets and measured performance indicators as well as qualifications, to maintain quality of CPD. However, Fryer noted in the context of support needs that skills needed to be allied to confidence building for teachers as well as learners. This raised another challenge for consideration in chapter 5 in relation to middle leaders’ and managers’ data on their own approaches to leading CPD.

### ***Further Education National Training Organisation (FENTO), (1998-2002)***

The significance of the FENTO documentation during this period lies in the way in which it takes forward specifically the earlier FESDF (1996) forum and the issue of developing professional FE standards. The expectation of Green and Lucas (1999) was that the work of FENTO would give more emphasis to both initial teacher training and the development of CPD, although Elliott (2000) felt that it was primarily concerned with competence-based, rather than higher order skills involving greater professional judgement.

Chronologically the influence of FENTO and its influence on FE standards fits between the Kennedy and Fryer reports and the publication of the Inspectorate (1999) report. However, FENTO’s impact within the period needs to be seen over a longer period of their activity. Lucas (2004, p.49) represents the complex history of change, regulatory bodies and lack of clear policy strategy in relation to teaching qualifications and CPD as a ‘FENTO fandango’, within the context of the diversity of FE professional practice contexts. Whilst FENTO officially ceased in 2002, it continued endorsement functions for teacher training courses beyond that. Meanwhile the DfES (2002) policy set up a support programme for training

programmes and proposed to reallocate some FE core funding but required colleges to include plans to target development of staff skills and qualification.

The FENTO professional standards for teaching and supporting learners in further education in England, were designed to inform professional development activity and were developed by FENTO between 1999 and 2002. Lucas (2004) acknowledges the difficulty in reaching agreement on FE standards which go beyond the functional and recognise the diversity of FE practice and this partly explains the lack of a regulatory basis pre-2007 for CPD. Although from 2001 all new teaching staff were required to be qualified and FENTO standards were mapped onto teacher training courses, CPD standards for FE staff proved more complicated. In particular this continued to be the case for part-time staff, increasing numbers of which were employed by agencies. In addition, the diversity of staff experience and practice across FE colleges needed to be recognised but CPD policy was varied across corporate colleges and split between occupational and professional tracks (Lucas and Nasta, 2010; Lucas, 2004). Whilst FENTO responsibilities included a need for those providing FE teacher training to have their qualifications endorsed by them, the standards were only loosely tied to continuing professional development in the sector (Avis et al., 2010). It is not clear how much they informed individual and informal means of professional development in colleges. Prior to 2007, the incoherence and lack of investment in a statutory regulatory base for CPD had been recognised by the Labour government, but moves towards some level of standardisation proved elusive, given the diversity of the sector and complexity of regulatory bodies. Divisions existed not only between school 16-19 providers and FE (Lucas and Nasta, 2010), but also between units within colleges, such as those where staff primarily offered adult learning, subject specific or occupational learning. The effect of this diversity created professional cultures with different CPD aspirations, expectations and practices. This also raised the debate about whether concepts of professionalism were being regulated from above via policy, rather than developing professionalism from within; this was an issue for leaders in college to balance.

Although LSDA argued that their own surveys, such as that by Frearson (2002), were linked to FENTO standards, FENTO had worked with other bodies such as the Adult Basic Skills unit, and the DfES on the leadership college, suggesting a mixed range of influences on standards. The 1999 FENTO standards were only developed subsequently in relatively minor ways by updating but were informed by subsequent bodies such as the Standards Unit of the DfES. Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK) standards were also used to inform IfL's model of CPD. Subsequently new standards were produced by the Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS) but were recognised as being based on the original FENTO set. Responsibility for standards passed to the Education and Training Foundation when it was established in 2013.

Apart from being linked to the DfES for shared responsibility for implementation of the 2001 legislation requiring new staff to be qualified in teaching, FENTO had been ultimately responsible for the promotion and quality assurance of the FE occupational standards for staff within the sector (Bailey and Robson, 2002). Whilst most of FENTO's Council were college corporation representatives, it included a range of other representatives of associated national bodies and employers, modelling other national training organisations. Despite this range of interests and involvement, which was intended to go some way to address sector diversity, Bailey and Robson raised questions about the appropriateness of the application of the standards to all staff in the diverse new combined lifelong learning sector after 2000, and particularly to part-time staff. Gleeson (2014) and others suggested that the standards had been too mechanistic to adequately apply to the diversity of FE. Elliott (1996) had raised concerns earlier about the model of applying types of competency-based absolute standards of occupational mapping, which did not take full account of professional matters of judgement and staff needs. Gleeson (2014) argued that standards could be used solely as instrumental measures of performance, despite the original intention of FENTO for them to be used for a variety of CPD purposes. The professional life history reflections in subsequent chapters may offer further insights into whether the standards were used to underpin appraisal in terms of lesson observation, rather than solely standards for initial teacher training, or whether other inspection or individual criteria of the college leaders were used.

### ***Professional development in FE Report from the Inspectorate (1999)***

The FEFC inspectorate produced its first full national report on professional development in FE only in 1999; a long period from incorporation before it rose towards the top of their FE agenda (FEFC, 1999). Although what it did report about the focus and extent of CPD at this point was significant, as the FEFC moved towards its replacement by the Learning and Skills Councils, the evidence on which it was based was limited and partial. The report, whose aim was to review corporate colleges' professional development activity, represents the single instance of FEFC's specific concern with professional development. The evidence base of this report was based only on 9 college case studies and 27 survey responses from 18 colleges. This limited range of sample colleges selected had all received high grades for quality assurance which biased its conclusions. Within this the report did reveal some variation of and limitations to, college professional development in this first decade of incorporation. This report was largely based on inspection criteria evidence plus a limited organisational survey, which created an emphasis on institutional and grading criteria rather than broader professional outcomes. Its conclusions were based on incomplete sector evidence, especially in relation to part-time staff, but the report did draw on individual college examples of the range of CPD activities. These ran from short course

provision, accredited training, internal 'project-based' staff group activity, course review outcome activity, self-assessment, appraisal, industrial updating secondment and work shadowing. The latter is the only example offered of more informal CPD based on the idea of sharing expertise within a community of practice.

Whilst this FEFC report noted that there was prioritisation of training supporting organisational objectives, it also cited the relative lack of CPD involving teaching skills, even when inspection grades on this were weaker. The question of the allocation by colleges of supporting resources was shown to be an issue for CPD, once this had been delegated to within core funding after incorporation. Although there was no reliable data available, the inspectorate estimated from inspection data that allocation ranged 'from 0.15 to over 2%' of income but that there was no agreed basis or criteria to determine what that covered (p.6). One cost-benefit analysis system used by a college was used to illustrate an approach based on staff and their line-managers' perceptions of the quality and benefits to both the individual, and the college, in relation to a wide range of criteria. These ranged from the delivery of the event, to content relevance to role and performance change outcomes. Scores were then compared to the total costs to inform future strategic CPD objectives and resource allocation, but this was an isolated example restricted to formal CPD event evaluation. Despite the limitations of its evidence base, this document provided some specific examples of indicators of practice in the area of CPD leadership, to evaluate in this research against leaders' own perceptions of how they related to CPD in their colleges.

### ***The Frearson report for LSDA 'Tomorrow's Learning Leaders' (2002)***

The Frearson report and the 'Success for All' document were part of a broader government strategy and resourcing of the sector which raised its policy profile. Frearson took forward the rising profile of policy thinking around staff development by surveying priorities of FE managers, whilst the 'Success for All' strategy suggested a step change was needed for CPD, involving a more collaborative approach to accessing opportunities for development.

Based on a survey, Frearson showed college managers had focused on vision, change and performance. In the case of middle managers, this was seen alongside developing day-to-day working relationships with staff to determine CPD priorities. The main relevance of this report lay in its highlight of a dominant focus on leaders' activity on immediate resource issues and time pressures which were felt to inhibit wider opportunities for CPD; this offers another issue to compare with individual leaders' perspectives in the research interviews.

In 2002, the policy developed which signalled the direction of the Labour government for FE, leading to its significant 'Success for All' final report confirming the DfES strategy and vision statement for reforming further education and training. The idea of potential

prioritisation of staff development, had been taken up by Fryer (1997) and aligns with this LSDA report by Frearson, on the quality of leadership and management; a perceived weakness that was beginning to show up in Inspection reports.

### ***‘Success for All’ (2002)***

The ‘Success for All’ (2002) Labour government strategy document, represented a government strategy turning point which built upon previous reports. Described by the secretary of state for education and skills as a ‘radical and ambitious reform and investment strategy’ for the sector it asserted an approach to reform from a collaborative viewpoint rather than a competitive one (DfES, 2002, p.2).

The reference to sector concerns and difficulties related to issues experienced with planning, funding, standards, outcomes and participation levels. The document contained specific reference to professional development, the extent of qualified staff and an aim to ‘increase access to continuing professional development’ for all staff including support staff (p.35). The ‘distinctive needs and characteristics of the adult and community learning sub-sectors’ were recognised but as a longer-term priority to tackle, along with the moderation of targets for teacher qualification levels for part-time vocational staff with small amounts of teaching input (p.37). The document confirmed a move to longer three-year development planning for colleges and associated targets to limit external accountability. It proposed that occupational standards were to be reviewed but that providers’ organisational plans should include both staff rewards, and strategies for under-performance of staff in terms of teaching and learning outcomes. In addition, the Standards Fund was to be redesigned to include provision for staff development. Alongside this the Centre for Excellence in Leadership (CEL), which supported sector leaders’ development, was to be incorporated in the improvement agency for the new sector.

Perhaps the most significant proposal alongside policy for CPD, related to the intention to develop pilot strategic area reviews to involve all providers within the new FE and Skills sector established in 2000, developed by the consultation document, Circular 2002/21 (LSC, 2002). Whilst this signalled a move from the market directly, to leading colleges to a greater focus on planning, the pilot area review programme was dropped within three years but re-emerged in 2015-2017 (Hodgson et al., 2015). The gestation of this area review strategy was a long process, and proceeded beyond the era of structural changes from the LSC under later funding agencies. The complexity of the bureaucratic organisational structure of the LSC and partnership organisations, to deliver provision for young people and adults, along with school sixth-form provision within the overall sector, led to a complex review task with diverse interests and multiple interested stakeholders (Coffield et al., 2005). The consequences were encouragement towards college specialisation, along

with rationalisation and mergers and created further pressures on colleges in relation to staffing. By 2003 the government initiative under the 'Skills for Life' set up from 2001 to develop adult literacy and numeracy skill levels, was beginning to 'swing away' to a focus on employer-led skills and participation in this area dropped (Nash and Jones, 2015, p.41).

***The Institute for Learning (IfL), (2002-2013)***

Within a period of policy involving changes to initial and in-service professional training of teachers, along with compulsory recording of FE professional CPD, the baton for national leadership and regulation passed from FENTO to the IfL in 2002. The introduction of the FENTO standards had been followed in 2001 by a statutory requirement in England for all new FE staff to be teacher qualified. Regulatory structures went on to be imposed in relation to both initial and continuing professional development of FE staff. Although this focussed national attention on the area, by the time of the Lingfield (2012) review the underlying mandatory CPD legislation was rescinded and the IfL was phased out.

Based on both the IfL's own review documents and the relevant literature, this section of the chapter evaluates the role of the IfL and includes a background narrative against which other reports and policy regarding CPD can be seen. Although established in 2002, effectively as a successor to FENTO, but as a statutory regulator as well as a professional body, IfL's initial role revolved around the area of initial teaching qualifications, as recognised in 2001, but its relevance to CPD becomes more apparent after 2007, until its statutory recording of CPD role is finally cancelled in 2012-2013.

Although national mandatory regulation of FE CPD was enshrined in legislation eventually in 2007 (but rescinded in 2012), a key issue during this period was the issue of monitoring in terms of its enforcement by the IfL, which involved sampling the individual reflective content of CPD portfolios. The controversies over the recording of CPD practice in FE between 2007 and 2012 had been the subject of much debate around the individual and employer control of professionals, definitions of status and who determined CPD needs (Lucas, 2004; Bailey and Robson, 2002).

CPD was presented by the IfL to sector staff as offering individual agency in determining the CPD form; one research theme in this thesis revolved around the question of how this was perceived by leaders and their staff. The IfL presented itself as a professional body alongside its regulatory functions creating potential role tensions. The way in which this actually operated under the regulations is further investigated via those leaders, discussed in chapters 5 and 6, and via perceptions of those who had a close involvement with the policy development itself. The reflections help to explain how, whilst the policy was produced nationally, IfL intended it to apply at college level to individuals.



By 2007, the IfL was designated as a professional body for a sector which had been re-named and restructured in 2000 as the 'Further Education and Skills Sector'. The regulations were designed to cover teachers, trainers and tutors in the component parts of the new sector. It was intended that the disciplinary function of the IfL could be used either in the case of a member being involved in a relevant criminal offence, or if they breached the IfL's code of professional practice (Scales, 2011). Scales emphasised the declared professional aim of the IfL to raise not only skill standards but also levels of professional commitment and status. Alongside these issues was the question of autonomy of individuals in recording their CPD annually. Although staff were required to share their CPD plans with their employer, it was determined by IfL that the form should be in a self-directed portfolio which each professional would be personally responsible to submit. Scales supported the aim of the CPD IfL guidelines and their means of recording CPD, but highlighted, from his experience of colleges, the need to take account of 'shifting policy contexts and priorities at organizational, local and national level' (Scales, 2011, p.86).

The regulation of CPD via compulsory individual membership registration and CPD recording, was intended to be monitored by the IfL in terms of sampling the reflective content of the portfolio. This process continued until 2012-2013 until the revocation of the regulations at which point the IfL lost its legislative and regulatory role (DBIS, 2012). The IfL had presented itself as a professional membership body, akin to professional bodies such as those of lawyers and doctors, but in comparison these professions had separated their regulatory and disciplinary roles from their continuous professional development functions, which structurally the IfL did not do. In consequence the IfL's somewhat disjointed roles were an uneasy amalgam of quite different understandings of what professional development and professionalism should involve, and how it should be led. This raises another issue to be reflected upon via leaders and managers in their professional life histories.

Although the intention was for the IfL to offer a focus for an independent professional voice for the sector and raise the status of the profession, its statutory duties to regulate CPD and registration of FE teachers, created a dilemma for its operation and its relationship with corporate employers. In its latter capacity the policy leading to statutory regulation of FE staff was developed and enacted. In the former, IfLs' own policy and reflections tried to suggest the notion of professional staff agency, and individual professional learning, by encouraging their members to self-determine the CPD they undertook and recorded. At the same time, they encouraged a focus on professional learning outcomes for both students and staff, which informed many of the learning aims of the sector as a whole (Crowther, 2014).

It could be argued that CPD regulation involved a flexible approach between 2007 and 2012 period when the IfL portfolio model of recording individual CPD allowed choice as to its

form, but there was potential in practice for it to be moderated in some colleges by controlling the record, which had to be shared with the college. The issue, for both the IfL and leaders and managers, was how far the organisation could adhere to this principle of professional membership autonomy and individual CPD needs, given the policy focus of links to organisational strategy and objectives. This became another question for evaluation in chapters 5 and 6 against leaders' own perceptions.

The IfL from 2007 worked within the statutory basis of the regulation of FE staff CPD, which required full-time staff to complete at least 30 hours of CPD each year, (and part-time staff pro-rata, with a minimum of 6 hours per annum), to record CPD, and to make it available to their employer. FE college staff were required to register with the IfL by 2008 and to maintain registration by annual recording of CPD. However, in the context of a wider sector after 2000, Lingfield (2012) later noted that private and charitable providers were excluded from statutory compliance as were instructors, assessors and verifiers. DIUS (2007) indicated that the Labour government were to fund the standard membership costs of FE staff registering with the IfL, (although in later years this government support was withdrawn leading to the boycott by staff of IfL membership).

The IfL itself in its own announcement of the reforms flagged the regulations as 'professional status for the further education and skills workforce' and noted that whilst FE employers were obliged to support staff to meet the needs of the individual, staff also needed to work within organisational frameworks and constraints (IfL, 2007). This suggested a recognition of the ideal of the sector achieving professional status as a whole, yet also the resource and agency issues for individual colleges. The DIUS issued an explanatory memorandum for the 2007 regulations, which observed that whilst colleges were expected to provide support for workforce development, their own evidence suggested that the level of this had been inconsistent in the past, especially in relation to allowing time off for development (DIUS, 2007).

The IfL annual review of CPD document (IfL, 2012), which was subtitled 'CPD for the future: the networked professional' saw its development support role as providing a means of networking, primarily by online means. The review offered a summary of CPD recorded and was based on focus group evidence and a sample of the CPD records submitted. They considered that there had been an undue emphasis in the portfolios on formal courses but in overview terms there was an even split between subject and vocationally based CPD. It was recognised by the IfL itself that it could be difficult to evidence impact outcomes on student learning, which may have led to the limited reference to it in the individual records. Only approximately 75% of teacher and trainer members declared their CPD to the IfL at its height, but the number of hours recorded was well in excess of the statutory minimum. Peer observation, mentoring and learning from colleagues were all cited as positive but concern had been expressed by members about 'sheep-dipping' approaches to compulsory

corporate business-orientated training in relation to external requirements using ‘tick-box’ CPD approaches (IfL, 2012). This raises an issue for exploration via leaders’ perceptions of the IfL system and cross-college organised training events.

The literature on, and that authored by the IfL, reveals the contested nature of their role and functions. This body attempted to achieve an integrated overview of the concept of professional development under the overall intention of a focus on the concept of professional learning (Crowley, 2014). Crowley, as the chair of IfL edited the 2014 collection of articles, so the strength of the evidence presented lay in her view as an insider, but its weakness in evaluating professional learning primarily via the concepts of ‘efficiency and effectiveness’; also evident in much government policy. Boon and Fazaeli (2014) argued, again from an internal and perhaps idealistic IfL viewpoint, for balanced CPD leadership between a response to individual needs and those of the organisation. However, Gleeson (2014) argued that the idea of placing professionals within a market and employer nexus creates a complex notion of professionalism in relation to the reality of implementation of policy, which may be more rhetorical than practice informed.

Before considering the Lingfield Report (2012), which reviewed the effectiveness of the IfL and its role in regulating CPD, it is necessary to review the policy documentation of the intervening period from 2005 to 2011. This included: a Labour government review of FE by Foster (2005), which built upon the 2002 ‘Success for All’ strategy; the White Paper of 2006 ‘FE: Raising Skills, Improving Life Chances’, which was published in the same year as the Leitch Review of Skills (2006) and the government ‘FE Colleges – Models for Success’ which followed in 2008. The Apprenticeship, Skills, the Children and Learning Act of 2009 dissolved the Learning and Skills Council and the new Coalition government produced their new strategy documents and plans in 2011.

### ***The Foster report ‘Realising the Potential’ (2005)***

As Stanton et al. (2015) observed essentially there was a conflict during this period between core sector economic skills development and wider social and educational purposes of FE. In addition, staff roles and functions varied from those predominantly focused on teaching and those in college business-facing roles as well as those leaders and managers who faced both ways, (Fletcher et al., 2015). Within this context, a report was produced by Foster, subtitled ‘A review of the future role of further education colleges’ (2005) for the DfES, to build on the work of the ‘Success for All’ (2002) report and within the context of the work of the LSC since 2000. The brief set for Foster was wide-ranging from sector ethos, reputation, leadership, employer engagement and business and income generation and sought to identify ‘best practice’. All of these themes are evident to some extent in most of the policy documents of the entire period but raised their profile in the combination of

reports and initiatives within this second decade of incorporation. Concepts of what constitutes 'best practice' and 'excellent practice' are highly contested, both in terms of what they mean in terms of ongoing development, and their definition in different contexts (Coffield and Edward, 2009).

The Foster report recognised FE staff as a vital resource for colleges but refers back to the 1992 FHE act offering them 'liberation' but constraint by being 'deliberately competitive' (Foster, 2005, p.16). Foster suggests that further structural reform had been necessary to create a wider sector, with reduced bureaucracy. After 2000 this was viewed as being partly achieved in order to enhance coordination and to encourage economic workforce development. Foster's evidence suggested to him that leadership of colleges was not strong and needed development, particularly in a context of the extent of part-time and casualisation of the college workforce (Foster, 2005). The report also highlighted evidence of 'a lack of up to date knowledge and experience amongst staff' (p.48). Along with issues of sector reputation and profile, compared to other educational sectors, Foster suggested these created a lack of a distinctive role and purpose for the sector and its colleges.

Foster's background and interests included work at the Audit Commission as well as in local government, banking and advising the Chancellor of the Exchequer, which were reflected in his views regarding efficiency and bureaucracy. In the production of this document he notes that he leant heavily on the DfES and LSC staff, but he argued that the report was based on extensive consultation. Much of that involved written submissions, individual meetings with organisations, (many of which were national bodies), plus visits to 12 colleges. The importance of the employer perspective is given some recognition by the inclusion of training providers alongside one general FE college principal and one sixth form college principal in his small advisory group.

The terms of reference for the review involved the wide-ranging task of defining a future vision for the FE sector, involving 14-19 reforms as well as responding to the development of the skills strategy of the government. In his recommendations Foster argued for structural reforms to the operation of the national sector infrastructure in relation to the LSC and the role for local LSCs. That, along with the focus on college leadership fixed more tightly on FE core functions, and was proposed to achieve clarity and effectiveness in working towards the national vision he portrayed. This suggested a more top-down approach to the skills agenda than professional ownership of targets (Steer et al., 2007). It aligns to the idea of stakeholders' potential conflicts of interest, between those of individuals and the state, expounded by Gleeson and Keep (2004). In considering the question of the influence of such policy on individual leaders' reflections regarding policy implementation, it is relevant to consider the warning of Edward and Coffield (2007, p.122) that it may be 'an oversimplification to say policy determines practice, but it helps to create the conditions

and atmosphere within which professionals and those who administer and implement policy must work’.

The strategic period from 2005 to 2011 is one which not only spans different governments and prime ministerial administrations but one which also suggests evidence of an underlying focus based on developing vocational skills for enhancing employability and productivity. For Leitch (2006), building on Foster (2005) this meant employer-led skills training reform (Nash and Jones, 2015). The FE White Paper (2006) took a similar strategic line which was allied to an aspiration to professionalise FE staff in terms of both pedagogic and subject development. From 2007 to 2010 a series of government agencies held the reform brief, which included initial and continuing professional development and monitoring the system regulation. By 2008 the focus had moved to one of efficiencies and potential sector rationalisation, via college amalgamations and mergers to show evidence of value for money. By 2009, attention moved to apprenticeships and local need, partnerships and cooperation and 2011 brought further FE reform and a reduction in central regulation, which anticipates the outcome of the Lingfield report of 2012 which led to the end of mandatory FE CPD.

***The Leitch Review of Skills ‘Prosperity for all in the global economy – world class skills’ (2006)***

The significant issue for college skills training provision, and its prioritisation for college CPD and updating, is linked to the largely voluntarist role of employer’s direct participation and funding of training. Seen as ‘a tension between asking employers and telling them’ (Nash and Jones, 2015, p.34) the Leitch review asserted that that employers should be compelled to take a more active part in this.

The review commissioned by the Labour government’s Treasury, together with the Secretary of State for education and skills, described as an independent review of the UK’s long-term adult vocational skills needs, proposed a major increase in qualification achievement at all levels, from basic skills in functional literacy and numeracy through GCSE and equivalent vocational to higher education levels. Leitch (2006) proposed that government should ‘provide the bulk of funding for basic skills’ (paragraph 40) and that employers should *co-operate* to ensure employees achieve such skills. For FE colleges this represented a significant proposal in this area and associated skill-based CPD for staff. Leitch saw ‘economically valuable’ skills as the most important demand-led lever to improve not only productivity but wealth, social justice and levels of child poverty and employment.

Lord Leitch, whose business background had included roles as a former chief executive of a financial services company and a chair of a national employment panel, represented in his

report a Treasury-based view that increased training would increase productivity. However, Wolf (2007) argued that it had little such effect. The Leitch report had an influence on the Labour government's ongoing policy documentation and on resource allocation to colleges in vocational areas, which had previously been seen as having had a supply rather than demand orientation. In particular it had an influence on CPD subject-based training and skills updating foci.

***Further Education: Raising Skills, Improving Life Chances (2006)***

This Labour government White Paper of 2006 was prepared by the DfES with a specific focus on the development of adult economic productivity labour skills. It built on the Foster and Leitch reports. The presentation of the reforms proposed was in the sense of them being instrumental in renewal of 'the mission of the further education system' implying a historical look back to a core technical purpose (DfES, 2006, p.1).

In terms of CPD the paper aimed to support that which they believed would improve teaching and learning standards, to intervene where needed in the sector, to resource more training, yet support greater college autonomy to develop what was regarded as quality provision. At the same time this 2006 paper recommended that inadequate provision would no longer be funded by the LSCs who would bring in new providers. This paper pulled together elements of an overview government strategy based on a high regard for the skills and employability agenda, demand-led funding, local needs via collaboration of providers, and stronger plans to deal with inadequacies of providers suggested by inspectors. At the same time the government saw increasing specialisms to be encouraged in FE and a strategic 16-19 role for local authorities. This paper flags the upcoming 2007 regulations in relation to CPD, to be regulated by the IfL which were intended to encourage a 'sustainable culture of professionalism' in the sector (p.50). The associated plan was to offer, for the first time, a single body for supporting providers in the area of teaching and learning in FE, in the form of the Quality Improvement Agency (QIA) (p.8). Enhancement of sector public profile, professional reputation, respect and status were argued to be underlying justifications for the policy developments (p.92).

In terms of CPD whilst the paper built on the Leitch review (2006), which focused on economic skills for prosperity and productivity, it was also concerned with values around social justice and the Foster (2005) report. Yet, the associated government department (DIUS, 2007) guide to the IfL Regulations suggested that the underlying government intention was to 'professionalise the FE workforce' and aimed to update 'subject knowledge, teaching skills and pedagogy' to support employers' responsiveness and upskilling. This guidance defined CPD in this way in order to equip staff to 'deliver national and local priorities' in relation to the recommendations in the Leitch review on skills of

2006 (DIUS, 2007). To support this the government asserted that ‘an element’ of funding was available within the funding via LSC for this training and development, although the previous experience of resources being submerged into core funding in 1992 had its limitations in implementation.

***Workforce Reform and FE: LLUK, LSIS and DIUS (2007-2010)***

In relation to the skill and employer need focus with implications for FE CPD, a Labour government workforce strategy for the FE sector, which was first developed in 2007 and revised in 2009, was produced by Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK). This agency was an employer-led sector skills council for the lifelong learning sector until 2011, and held FE professional standards until these were passed to the sector-led learning and skills improvement service (LSIS) after the Lingfield Report on ‘Professionalism in FE’ (2012).

The role of LSIS from 2008 was to work with organisations within the sector nationally, along with the IfL and other bodies including the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA), to implement the government workforce strategy reforms with a focus on appropriate training for a flexible workforce intended to meet needs of learners and their employers.

The FE Workforce Reforms (DIUS, 2007; 2009), with which LLUK were involved in an advisory capacity, covered initial teacher training, CPD and principals’ qualifications as well as CPD for adult basic skills with the ‘Skills for Life’ provisions. Whilst the approach was designed to encourage colleges and employers to invest in staff development, the minister of state also placed the onus on individual staff ‘to professionalise the workforce’ and ‘actively seek and have effective continuing professional development’. Colleges were expected to have in place systems to achieve this although the details were not centrally regulated.

Yet there was a distinction in this documentation between the duty placed on staff and the responsibility of human resources (HR) departments in colleges to demonstrate that clear systems were in place ‘to support and provide CPD for all teaching staff’ (DIUS, 2007, p.4). One of the research questions in relation to implementation of CPD by college leaders is the extent to which HR, business orientated, training systems would co-exist with other forms of CPD, in terms of leaders’ perceptions and prioritisation of appropriate professional development.

LLUK continued to extol the need, (until parts of its role were taken by LSIS in 2011 and ETF in 2013), for a more professional expert workforce, which was felt would make personal and career CPD opportunities more accessible and responsive to both the social and economic challenges (LLUK, 2009; 2011). These sentiments reinforce the policy skill development intention regarding CPD, but did not necessarily chime with the prioritisation

individual colleges and their departmental leaders put upon their strategies and CPD functions.

In the DIUS document 'FE Colleges - Models for Success' (2008) the government had acknowledged that the student and staff base across the diverse sector and within colleges might need alternative approaches to leading and managing FE staff (DIUS, 2008). Whilst it was claimed that their own data suggested that there was not a direct relationship between the size of a college and its financial viability, they did recognise that financial viability had been a factor in some proposals for amalgamation. The documentation of this period included reference to merger criteria for colleges and the need to relate to learner and employer need, learner choice, participation rates, community access, equality and diversity and ultimately better value for money (DIUS, 2008, Annex 1). This raises the question of potential rationalising effects of merger and amalgamations on CPD for staff as an influential issue for leaders in determining CPD strategies in colleges. As the 'Evidence Base on College Size and Mergers in the Further Education Sector' (DIUS, 2008) noted, the number of mergers each year had risen sharply by 2008.

***Apprenticeship, Skills, Children and Learning Act (ASCL), (2009)***

In dissolving the LSC (s.123) and establishing the Skills Funding Agency and the Young People's Learning Agency in 2010, the statutory significance of the Act (ASCL, 2009) for FE colleges lay in its amendment to the 1992 FHE Act. This now laid on colleges the duty to provide for the economic and social well-being of their local area. It also emphasised Labour's strategy to encourage co-operation within partnerships, to consult and to offer advice in doing so.

The 2009 Act put in place statutory obligations and performance criteria for apprenticeships with the intent to provide scope for improved quality of such training and increase levels of participation in it. An apprenticeship contract was put in place with associated guided learning hours. Hogarth et al. (2012) point out that the underlying intent, along with Leitch, was to raise the status of the qualification, but without a significant employer levy, the effect was limited, as was the level of apprenticeship take-up in colleges. Fleckenstein and Lee (2018, p.120) note, 'with some surprise', the later conservative government introduction of an apprenticeship funding levy; given the scale involved this was not expected to have any meaningful effect.

Although there was no specific reference to staff CPD in the ASCL Act, the emphasis on partnership working had echoes of the pre-1992 era, when at least at local authority level, there had been some, if variable, sharing of professional development resources and support. It can also be linked to subsequent references to partnership and collaboration. In some respects, the ASCL Act marked a change of direction, with its emphasis on apprentice



skills, and the increased regulatory environment of Ofqual and market issues associated with performance tables (Jones, 2011; Unwin, 2010).

***New Challenges, New Chances: Next Steps in Implementing the Further Education Reform Programme and the FE and Skills System Reform Plan (2011)***

These two coalition government strategy documents, published in 2011 focused on further FE reform. The first developed plans for the ‘Next Steps’ in FE reform within a de-regulated agenda. The second was a DBIS plan concerned with FE and Skills reform (DBIS; 2011). Described as policy not only to ‘promote high quality teaching at all levels of the adult education system’, but also to reduce bureaucracy, increase institutional autonomy and effect better response to local communities, the proposals related primarily to support for adult provision. Specific proposals included a reduction in inspection levels and an increase in self-assessment processes, a reduction in levels of audit, a simplification of the funding system and in CPD terms, for colleges to ‘harness its own expertise’ to be allied to expertise from the workplace within colleges. The second paper in 2011 from DBIS includes consideration of the professional workforce and announces the intention to set up what became the Lingfield Report. In its own progress report, the paper reports that the Education Act (2011) would remove ‘a raft of regulations’ to offer colleges greater autonomy, not only for high performing colleges, but to reduce regulations where ‘non-statutory processes provided sufficient safeguards’ already (DBIS 2011, p.38).

***The Lingfield Report: ‘Professionalism in Further Education’ (2012)***

Lingfield had a record of experience in public service and in the school sector. After reports in the area of FE he went on to become involved in the short-lived Chartered Institution for high performing colleges, (which only had a small voluntary membership and aimed to promote the status of such colleges).

Although often integrating the forms of initial and in-service teacher training qualification with ongoing CPD in colleges, the main significance of the Lingfield report lay in the consequences of some of its recommendations with regard for CPD diversity, responsibilities and the notion of a specific professionalism for the FE sector. The elements of quality, inspection and performance, value for money, de-regulation and localised responsibility lay behind many of the recommendations, but are expressed within the overall context of professionalism of a diverse and confusing sector, which he argues duplicates provision.

The Lingfield reports, interim and final, (March and October, 2012), were commissioned by the Minister of State for Further Education, Skills and Lifelong in the Department for

Business Innovation and Skills (DBIS) under the Coalition Government in 2012. They were produced by what was described as an ‘independent review panel’ chaired by Lingfield (2012) on behalf of the coalition government department responsible for FE skills and lifelong learning. The report panel consisted of only four members, plus a secretary to the review, and their experience comprised that of the adult learning inspectorate, a college principal and the chief executive of a skills limited company (Lingfield, 2012, Appendix 4). The review drew on a wide range of documentation, visits and witnesses from those involved in further education agencies and FE colleges, as well as trade unions and other educational providers (Lingfield, 2012, p.38-42). It was also informed by over 1000 responses to its public consultation exercise and had research input from academic studies on FE professionalism such as those produced by Lucas (2012) and Lucas and Nasta (2010).

The brief for Lingfield, following the abolition of many government quangos and within a context of austerity, was to tackle what the Government saw as failings of professionalism in the sector. In particular the issues of CPD over-regulation, consistency and value for money, all within the context of de-regulated localism, and individual and organisational responsibility (Lingfield, 2012, p.2). The main criticism was of the outcome performance of the IfL between 2007 and 2012 in failing to achieve widespread commitment of employers to support their staff, or indeed what Lingfield considered a reasonable level of individual staff commitment to the undertaking and recording of staff CPD. Although the extent of IfL membership had increased from 4000 to 200,000 whilst membership registration fees were subsidised by the government, when this was withdrawn the numbers dropped to 85,000 members to record CPD annually. Only between 2900 and 6000 members were reported as becoming fully qualified. These figures were compared to estimates of a total workforce of 188,000, although this may not have included those in teaching support staff roles (p.5; p.13). This situation for staff in-service training was not regarded by Lingfield as ‘credible as a licence to practice’ especially when other professions required this before practice. Lingfield reported concerns about the perceived value-added by the IfL and recommended that the duty to undertake updating should lie with employees, rather than that being just shared with their employer.

Already by 2009 the government had announced its intention to phase out IfL funding, the registration levels were falling significantly by 2011-2012. Lingfield noted Ofsted’s view of the lack of a sound, causal link between compulsory regulation and practice improvements (p.16), although he argued that a common-sense deduction might be that CPD would result in improved outcomes. The ongoing effect of change was evident in view of the FE support and development organisations, set up by, or with the support of government since 2004, which had been abolished, including FENTO, LLUK and QCA. Some of their duties had been taken over by such bodies as the Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS), and subsequent agencies, but these were not intended to take

on all the functions of the previous bodies. The IfL was to return to its role as a voluntary professional membership body. Lingfield's proposal (2012) for an FE Guild to take on support for CPD, in a more consensual and shared aspirational manner, was intended to increase a sense of individual obligation rather than regulation, in terms of professionalism

Lingfield reported a concern that the full range of the CPD needs of the FE workforce, from assessors to instructors, from mentors to verifiers and work-based providers, and adult and community staff, had not been addressed by the narrow focus and limited IfL model of teachers in FE. However, he also observed that this range of staff, compared to other professions, restricted the development of a specific notion of professionalism for lecturing staff.

De-regulation of CPD was justified in the panel's view to be best served by organisations being 'left alone, in near autonomy, to get on with serving their students, their local communities and their employers' (Lingfield, 2012, p.ii). In removing mandatory teaching qualifications and CPD centralised recording in FE, Lingfield proposed that FE employers and staff should negotiate between themselves, agreements regarding obligations which could be codified in a form of covenant or compact. Lingfield also argued that Ofsted should be provided with guidance to enable them to reliably monitor CPD and that they should use their inspection framework criteria for staff performance to do so. Ofsted criteria by 2017 included that requiring inspectors to take account of the need for 'Leaders, managers and governors [to] use incisive performance management that leads to professional development that encourages, challenges and supports staff improvement' (Ofsted, 2017). This implies a more formal, than informal, approach to CPD and regulated activity.

The issue of IfL's role as a regulatory authority in terms of its professional conduct and disciplinary duty, was reviewed by Lingfield but was not regarded as a major issue. Other bodies such as the Criminal Records Bureau and employment law already covered most of the consequences of gross professional misconduct. The Lingfield interim report, section 3, observed that no lecturer had been permanently disbarred nationally on grounds of incompetence and there had only been 11 cases. Only one of those related to curriculum related errors so the issue was regarded as very low risk overall.

### **Postscript**

Lingfield's proposal for some form of professional covenant as an FE Guild to be set up as an employer-led partnership, developed by 2013 into the establishment of a new sector-led body with charitable status as the Education and Training Foundation (ETF). Offering training programmes, workforce data and with a Board and directors including college, business, trainer and third sector representatives, the ETF was grant funded by the Department for Education with a brief to support specific areas of activity, These included:

improving the quality of the FE profession including area review and the Skills Plan; supporting the sector on the teaching of maths and English; research activity to support the FE profession and supporting the reform of apprenticeships and early years tutors (DfE, 2017). Thus, the ETF is government backed via funding as a major contractor but its voluntary membership enables it to present itself as ‘owned’ by its members, as it includes the Society for Education and Training body within their group. The significance of this for leadership of CPD in the FE colleges was that whilst the ETF could operate as a support and advisory body, it did not have the regulatory functions of the IfL.

### **Policy documentary implications for leadership of CPD**

Many of the policy perceptions expressed through the official documentation of the corporate period, can be seen as policy rhetoric from a skill-based outcome achievement view, but can also be considered as part of an underlying cyclical political, historical, policy ‘grand narrative’. This is presented as relative, corporate ‘freedom’ following incorporation. However, the managers and leaders of colleges moved from a period of close accountability to funders through quality and output structures, to a relative loosening of some central controls yet retaining some form of funding accountability. As Taylor (2004) argues this operated within a broad policy discourse from directive to more collaborative approaches, even for colleges who were perceived to be efficient and effective in performance terms. Policy is supported during different periods by the relative emphasis on collaboration compared to competition. However, whilst policy is expected to be an important influencing factor in terms of accountability, its effect cannot necessarily follow as the policy intended (Troyna, 1994), given potential for individual values and agency. Coffield et al. (2005) suggests that partnership was presented in policy in order to compensate for the legacy of marketisation and dysfunctional competition, but given the range of organisations and agencies involved perhaps a hybrid was created of business and education. Coffield (2007) argues that the official policy narrative suggests that the government uses levers, such as funding, inspection and planning targets, to control the system, whereas college fear of failing to survive may be a greater pressure on colleges and staff.

The scale of ongoing change for colleges is illustrated in this chapter by this account of significant documentation and the associated literature and some commentators suggest that policy documents can effectively signal substantial new directions (Hyland, 2002) or re-directions (Avis, 2009) for the sector, which do not follow the previous polarised political paths. There is also some evidence of historical cyclical processes for example in relation to the strategic role of local authorities and the relationship between adult and community education and that relating to academic provision and vocational skills. Nevertheless, recognition of different ways of working, values and culture, both within colleges and

across the expanded sector, may be gaining increasing recognition in the policy documentation and can impact on leaders' CPD approaches as suggested by Hodgson et al. (2015).

In CPD terms the profile of both policy and activity remained largely in the corporate background in the twentieth century as other corporate structural, staffing and strategic issues dominated the agendas evident in the documentation. Moving into the twenty-first century and the new extended Lifelong Learning and Skills sector, the formal inclusion of another layer of diverse education and training providers increased the complexity of college CPD collaborative needs, despite an often-documentary focus presented of the sector as a coherent whole.

The transient period of statutory enforcement of compulsory CPD, from 2007 to 2012 sat uneasily with the historical voluntarism of the sector as a whole and the senses of professionalism often associated with FE staff (Bailey and Unwin, 2014). Ultimately compulsion for staff CPD recording failed to achieve widespread support, amongst both employers and staff. The regulating body of the IfL, who aimed to be both an independent professional body whilst also a regulator under statutory duty, had difficulty in acting in both capacities.

Historically, the documentary evidence suggests that within national policy historical emphasis on FE leadership and management, CPD was not normally a high priority, although its visibility gradually rose. Whilst policy acknowledges that FE has operated as a corporate entity with the relative associated financial organisational autonomies, colleges have wider competitive business markets and staff than other sectors of education and thus a wider range of CPD opportunities are needed. This situation creates corporate status with theoretical ability for colleges and staff to determine their own CPD route, but with limited policy and funding boundaries in practice, and being 'curbed by a legislative framework' with extensive accountabilities (Lumby and Simkins 2002). The FE/Lifelong Learning and Skills sector occupies what has been described as a 'confusing and ambivalent position' within educational sectors and the diverse needs of staff in colleges add a further layer of complexity (Avis, 2009, p.633).

To understand the sector and its leadership of CPD in colleges, it has been necessary to consider the nature and historical development of this diverse education and training sector, which has often been characterised as neglected in policy terms, chaotic, unstable, the subject of ongoing significant change, but still lacks either the status or coherence of the school or higher education sector (Huddleston and Unwin 1997; Ainley and Bailey 1997; Robson, 1996). The developing policy documentary framework does demonstrate both the scope and gradual rise in profile of post-incorporation FE CPD, and the context in which it operates, which is relatively unstable regarding central CPD strategies. Elliott (2013), Foskett (2002), Lumby and Tomlinson (2000) and others, including policy report authors,

widely acknowledge the unusually diverse nature of the further education sector in England, which is also represented by much legislation and policy presented as having a distinct sector entity. The nature of FE, its provision and markets, organisational structures, staffing and organisational access to funding, alongside particular college visions, missions and purposes, encompass a complex range of influences, expectations, values, contexts and understandings of leadership in particular organisations. Within such a context, individual college leaders of CPD operate and this affects the ways in which policy is interpreted.

This diversity of FE provision and providers reinforces the concept of needs for staff with multiple identities, experiences and expectations within and across colleges (Elliott, 2011). Even the plethora of terms used to describe FE, from education to training, from learning to skills, from post-compulsory education to forms of youth, adult and community education, 'reflect the ambiguities of the sector as well as its increasingly fluid and blurred boundaries' suggested by Avis (2009). In addition, FE provision, (some of which it shares with the compulsory sector as well as that which involves degree level, higher education), illustrates this lack of clear sector boundaries and a clear professional identity, also noted by Lingfield (2012).

The range of CPD perceptions within the sector is unsurprising in this context where different notions of professionalism and options for leadership of professional development are involved. The extensive range of both is widely recognised and applied in the literature across the historical corporate periods from Ainley and Bailey (1997) to Simmonds (2008) to Avis (2009). This range creates a sector which spans myriad policies, structures, influences and responses, yet works within official policy narratives identified within the documentation, as well as unofficial individual personal narrative perceptions and understandings of leaders and managers

The importance of understanding the relationship between policy and leadership practice regarding CPD lies partly in its relationship to, and accounting for, professional learning outcomes. However, as Edwards and Coffield (2007) observe, policy may influence practice, create conditions and an atmosphere when enacted, but does not directly determine practice. It does create drivers in terms of cues and levels to enforce via regulation (Steer et al., 2007), but can be used by leaders either as a shield for staff or to focus on targets and does allow for some adaptation, mediation and application of professional judgement. In chapters 5 and 6, it is also about how these policy changes were interpreted, mediated and balanced by leaders in the light of their own experiences and values. Chapter 5 goes on to consider this in the contexts of findings from reflective individual professional life history narratives of middle managers leadership of CPD and in chapter 6 that of FE senior managers.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **PROFESSIONAL LIFE HISTORY FINDINGS: MIDDLE LEADERS AND MANAGERS**

#### **Introduction**

In chapter 5 and the following chapter, the focus is on analysis of the reflective narrative findings of leaders and managers in further education (FE) colleges, working in the context of continuing professional development (CPD). The focus is on the period from incorporation through to the FE and lifelong learning and skills sector structure. The professional life history data is also analysed in relation to some of the key concepts around CPD discussed in chapter 2, and the insights offered on this, via the documentary policy data on the sector considered in chapter 4. Contextual information derived primarily from organisational inspection reports is incorporated into the profiles of each leader but detailed references have been edited to preserve the anonymity of individuals.

Chapter 5 considers those who see themselves as middle leaders and managers within their college structure and held either cross-college or subject/disciplinary area responsibilities. Chapter 6 goes on to consider examples of senior managers who had a greater cross college and policy involvement.

This chapter is concerned with the individual perceptions of middle leaders and managers, reflected in their own narratives of their lived professional life histories. It is informed by the ways in which these experiences were perceived, translated, mediated and reflected upon in the context of their own organisation. This is seen within the overall contextual and historical policy influences of post-incorporation FE.

Since leadership history is not predictive in the broad generalised sense, the value of professional life histories lies in its specific contexts, ‘because only it contains the full range of human actions’ (English 2008). The narratives presented in these chapters are selected and subjective perceptions as the subject recalled, but since they were recalled, they are considered to offer insights into individuals’ own values, and their individual relationship to the policy context in which they operated.

The use of the term ‘leading and managing’ in continuing professional development in FE is often used to represent elements of both leadership and management, although in places elements of one or the other predominate. The model English identifies is a composite one which focuses on ‘dimensions which connect concepts of management and leadership’ as all of these narratives combine elements of this interpretation of leadership and management (English, 2008 p.13). This recognises an interaction between formal, role and authority-based management, with informal, situated and context specific dimensions of leadership, which has points of alignment with the FE leaders’ and managers’ reflections.

In order to highlight the narrative, historic and thematic influences in relation to my research questions, links are made in the final section to associated themes in the literature. The analysis of the findings in this chapter in relation to middle leaders and managers is presented within the following structure. This is intended to acknowledge both the potential strengths of narrative to offer individual insights into influences on their leadership of CPD, whilst drawing in the practical ways of leaders implementing, mediating and working within the sector policy framework.

- Summary profiles are used for each middle leader/manager which places them within their professional and college contexts and indicates the scope of their leadership and management roles.
- This is followed by identification of the leaders' dominant influential emphases and themes, as identified from their own professional life span narrative perceptions, to illustrate particular experience in their context. This approach acknowledges narrative frameworks involving ongoing influences, of both policy structural, as well as life history, change and experiences. It is similar to research approaches, used by Hammersley-Fletcher and Strain (2011), Floyd (2009), Seidman (2006) and Jameson (2006).
- Each narrative is linked to identified professional policy influenced factors and sector change encountered and represented in policy documentation. The accounts of leader perceptions are primarily focused on their own words as expressed in the interview conversations.
- Finally, the narratives are compared in an overview section by theme and historical context of their leadership.
- Themes from the conceptual literature are linked to this evaluation to offer insights into the overall research questions. The underlying issue of the extent of co-existence of business and educational influences and values, across differential contexts and leaders' professional experience, is evaluated within the final section of this chapter.

Each profile in relation to this research covers the period of their recollection of their professional experience, that they considered to be relevant to the central research focus. Between them the profiles and reflective experience of middle and senior managers cover the post-incorporated period from 1992 to 2017, but as indicated in chapter 4, the main focus of the thesis lies in the period 1993-2010. This relates to the date of the first narrative recorded. Some narratives, covering the later period, provided some useful reflections on their experiences and direction of travel for their college in subsequent years. The experiences of several of the leaders cross the historic FE policy and government periodisation discussed in chapter 4. The analysis of the data aims to recognise the influence of the individual life story periods, but extracts from the particular experiences the historic influences on their approaches to CPD during those times. In all cases the professional life



histories reveal constructions of FE professional identities and values, influenced by personal and professional experiences, and reflect leaders' own perceptions of the most influential issues for CPD.

The structure of these findings chapters takes account of the leaders' functional role/s as well as their underlying values. This is intended to identify where the management roles can be seen to have had particular relationships with policy implementation in terms of concepts of identities, self-agency and accountabilities. The relationship of each leader to their historical and immediate professional and leadership and management context is evaluated in terms of wider policy influences. The background to the sample of middle leaders' contexts is outlined in Appendix 4.

The middle leaders came into Further Education leadership and management from different backgrounds, but all have different work experiences of leadership and management, as well as teaching, in post incorporation of colleges in the English FE sector. The range of the college middle leaders reflect the widely noted diversity of the sector in terms of its vocational, academic and adult educational provision, types of previous professional life experience and perspectives of its leaders, as well as the different needs of the range of academic and vocationally orientated staff they lead. Some leaders operated within departmental contexts; others cross-college and all were influenced both by their own history and culture as well as that of their teams and external policy imperatives. However, in addition the leaders operated to some extent within the related vision, mission and strategy of their organisational positioning.

The extent historically to which middle leaders may exercise individual professional agency in relation to government agendas, may have been constrained and/or more integrated into their leadership approaches, in the immediate organisational context in which they worked (Hammersley-Fletcher and Strain, 2011). The other key concepts considered include the ways in which accountabilities impinge on the nature of CPD opportunities for staff, who may have different staff identities. However, as Jameson (2006) concludes, conceptually FE leadership is elusive, diverse and influenced by a wide range of factors. A key issue in this chapter is to attempt to identify the extent, and the ways in which different individual professional experiences influence CPD leadership, in the context of corporate business and educational values. The overall structure used in this chapter in relation to the research questions, explores the leaders' perceptions within the framework of perceptions of CPD in diverse contexts, the relationship between experiential and wider corporate influences, and how agency and accountability is affected.

Middle managers and leaders are represented in this chapter by M and a letter designation. In the following chapter those with senior management experience in FE by S and a letter designation. Those with both middle and senior leadership/management FE experience,

and who were also closely involved in national policy development, are indicated by SMP in Chapter 6.

In this chapter, middle leaders and managers are identified as MA, MB, MC, MD and ME in order to preserve anonymity, in a sector which can involve contracts with confidentiality clauses as well as commercial and market competition restrictions placed upon staff. Each leader/manager is considered individually in relation to their leadership experience then in relation to key CPD concepts and contextual themes. The five narratives are compared in the final section of this chapter.

### **Professional life histories of Leaders MA, MB, MC, MD and ME**

#### ***Leader MA***

##### *Profile*

This profile of leader and manager MA includes experience of working in FE colleges prior to incorporation, and then for the following ten years, into the period of post-FEFC funding control. Her medium sized, general FE coastal college concerned, has multi-dispersed sites with a rural surrounding catchment. The area covered is very diverse in economic and social terms and there was competition in relation to 16-19-year provision, although eventually some partnerships with other providers were negotiated. The college inspection outcomes ranged from unsatisfactory to good over the incorporated period, and noted early failure to meet funding targets. Although the extent of CPD was recorded as variable in inspection reports, particularly in relation to part-time staff, informal CPD was judged to be good. Resources were later allocated to link more closely to policy objectives, along with recognition of a greater sense of a shared vision across the college. The cross-college context for leader MA was challenging and a very mixed experience, since it related to support of provision and staff working with 14-16 years, to that of a range of vocational to academic staff. The leadership was exercised in a college which was subsequently merged with another college in the county. This leader's career had moved from a period working in market research to an academic lecturing role in FE, followed by a period as a head of an academic orientated department. Within the same college this leader then took on a much more vocationally orientated role involving cross-college leadership of integrated key skills across the curriculum. MA was a service manager, rather than having much direct line staff or subject curriculum responsibility. In this respect, the role involved support and identification of wider CPD needs, for the delivery of basic skills CPD for staff. This was delivered primarily via external providers and linked closely to the relevant policies on achievement and national targets. The post holder was responsible for working with a small central team who provided information, advice and guidance so resulted in a broad and diverse remit overall. The individual development of staff was primarily undertaken by

other managers within college curriculum-based departments, who were also responsible for appraisal, curriculum targets and other forms of CPD. This leader did not undertake any teacher training herself prior to work in FE but undertook on-the-job training. MA regarded professional development as being heavily influenced by sector targets and associated funding. Following over a decade of leadership roles within FE, MA moved on to 10 years of consultancy work in basic skills with other colleges via national FE development agencies. She also worked as an Inspector for the adult learning inspectorate and then as an Ofsted inspector. The construction of this leader's own perceptions of the influences on leading CPD is structured in relation to the overall influences of incorporation, and its effects on professional themes, but was clearly influenced by the particular contexts in which she operated.

#### *Key influences on MA*

Leader MA was clear that the influence of incorporation was significant in terms of funding, policy and the associated effects on CPD. She began by reflecting on the general significance of the changes which incorporation brought to her professional roles. This included her awareness of the sense of business demand-led approaches to linking rational objectives to performance and planning evaluation in a competitive climate.

*When incorporation came in in 1993, it changed everything in FE. There was more organisational autonomy after incorporation but staff did not really understand the quality assurance cycle. Pre-incorporation, students and staff chose the curriculum. After incorporation, you could only do things for which there was funding but there was also much competition post incorporation. For my college, the geography of the area meant there was a further education college nearby and local sixth-form colleges. I wish I had understood incorporation more when it came in. Senior managers had very large pay rises and this did not go down well with staff. In some colleges, there was a culture of bullying [seen as] using the power of incorporation. There were mission statements but I realised on reflection that we needed to follow through the policies to staff development. This was never properly monitored and we didn't do this; we should have.*

The emphasis on resources and funding suggested a system-led approach to leading and managing, especially in the earlier period of incorporation, before significant policy informed reports of 1997 and 2005 encouraged more of a demand-led approach.

*There were funding issues and it was very funding driven; which students could be funded for support? how to put a course together for maximum funding? or how might development relate to competition with the local school 6th form provision? Rather than actual student need.*

Data driven measurable targets were not necessarily allied to a sense of shared vision and values as demonstrated by MA's recollection in this college.

*We had an entrepreneurial principal who was into franchising and European Social Funding but the staff were not altogether with him. The principal was about running a business; for the staff, it was about education. Therefore, there was lots of resistance to training, especially regarding lesson observation and the need to collect data, which was not seen as their job. On reflection, it would have been better to focus on the implications of what the data was for, not how to collect it.*

The influence of the application of central CPD policies became apparent as it rose up the policy agenda, as a linked factor to instrumental notions of its effect on measurable and funded outcomes. Leader MA here offers a challenge to what the IfL considered to be its position on learning and professionalism. She also recognised the new markets in terms of learners which colleges were encouraged to access, but also the ways in which this affected immediate, but not necessarily longer-term, strategic college responses to CPD.

*Teacher training lost much of the theory; the focus was on what to do rather than why you were doing it. When the institute for learning required recording of what staff CPD they had undertaken they did not really understand how learning worked in colleges. The students changed but essentially it was about what the government wants in terms of policy. We adapted to the situation. I don't think incorporation was totally a waste of time but you couldn't really turn teachers round that fast. CPD days with a programme were put in place and feedback collected, but nobody looked long term at the long-term impact.*

The particular context of leading key basic skills staff cross-college traversed internal and external boundaries, disciplinary boundaries and challenged staff professional identities. In terms of professional identities of staff there were significant disciplinary divergences which affected attitudes towards skills training and development. Firstly, she reflected on the personal and professional change of focus her own career changes involved.

*From being head of English for GCSE/A level, I then added key skills and then from the mid- 1990s I had a cross-college role. There was no real cross-college team, just an admin assistant and a small guidance team. I had to make things happen by persuading the heads of department to implement key skills being delivered. There was some resistance to key skills within the college, expressed as 'I am a mathematician, I am an English teacher; not a key skills teacher'. So, it was difficult to embed key skills into subjects. Staff defined themselves as teachers not as part of a business.*

*There were dominant vocational versus academic identities. Staff such as those in hotel and catering, construction, electricians, were definitely more business*

*orientated. English staff really didn't see that. They saw themselves as English teachers and were unwilling to engage with business. Each department in further education had their own culture. Unlike school organisational culture there were no similarities between departments and disciplines.*

*Whilst some disciplinary oriented roles were more closely linked to subject curriculum development and identities, key skills were perceived differently by different departments and staff in that the skills curriculum was seen as imposed, college and sector wide. The leadership role for the actual implementation of the skills curriculum was distributed through the subject departments, and closely linked to the impact of measurable quality systems and outputs.*

The role of MA in leading cross-college was more closely orientated to implementing central policy and using national training resources to support CPD. This involved a human resources training approach which assumed a shared understanding of the needs of the provision, rather than a more individualised approach by either staff or students. She compares this to her leadership approach when working with staff in an academic discipline area.

*Key skills support and development was seen as being imposed from above and staff saw the classroom and the subject as their domain so it was difficult to get them to work in teams cooperatively. As to responsibility for training, as head of English I had been subject focused and had budget responsibility but the key skills leadership role became a quality assurance one with central things to be delivered. I had a human resources quality manager and used external trainers and myself to lead staff training days. The key skills support programme depended heavily on those external staff. We often relied on what was on offer via government programmes and their Basic Skills Unit and this tended to be what was offered on staff training days.*

MA's personal reflections focus on the effect of implementing ongoing change within short timescales and targets that were imposed by the policy environment after incorporation.

*I feel looking back it was rather haphazard and not coherent, but having gone around the country as a consultant later, I feel this was typical of other colleges in this curriculum area. I spent 10 years supporting colleges, including some big organisations, and the staff were not really prepared for incorporation.*

*The role in college involved an overview and a need to develop internal policies, but there was not necessarily a match between external policies and the training being put in place for staff. What worked best as CPD was to focus on specific examples. For example, to consider simple things like setting an appropriate date for a student to submit to ensure both retention and achievement.*

Leader MA's perceptions of inspection and appraisal in the key skills area was that the policy and criteria raised particular challenges to staff professional self-autonomy in relation to their expertise. It was revealed not only in their response to centralised approaches to basic skills training based directly on the policy aim, but also in comparison to more individualised approaches to professional development that some had previously experienced. However, these reinforced perceptions expressed in policy by Fryer (1997) around college, rather than learner led interests.

*As an inspector, I found people were terrified about inspection; found it intrusive because of the consequences. Also, teachers didn't understand what the inspectors were after and had a fear that inspectors would catch them out. Before incorporation people felt they knew what they were doing in teaching with HMI breezing in and out. The Common Inspection Framework, introduced by Ofsted, was mostly focused on learning, not necessarily on teaching. Although the colleges prepared self-assessment reports before inspection, the staff saw this as a bureaucratic waste of time.*

There were different views around the main purpose of appraisal and its link to performance issues which were in turn linked directly to measurable organisational targets. This affected opportunity potential for personal individual professional development of staff, compared to a focus on the skill-based organisational and policy support emphasis.

*As a head of English, I had found during appraisals that there was a perception that it was all about personal development. For example, a teacher wanted to go to Japan but she should have been identifying the [development] need in relation to college policy. Pre-incorporation there was more development of the individual.*

*In my cross-college training role it was clearer. It was all about getting the student on the 'right' course and development for their particular role. Support assistants didn't always understand their role, not just a post-incorporation issue, it just coincided with it. It was a question of getting all these staff developed with functional skills to be used effectively within colleges. Instructors were exploited and not trained enough, mostly in the areas of IT, engineering and construction. They were not used as intended for the role and left unsupported.*

#### *Summary of MA*

MA's perceptions suggest a story of some mismatch between underlying policy assumptions around shared visions, performance criteria and targets in relation to different staff disciplines and roles, identities, and associated values and expectations. Her own response did largely align to the policy business focus of incorporation, but her approach to implementing policy was also informed by both her business and educational experience,

especially in relation to inspection. It was apparent to this leader that the policy-informed measurable, competence and quality agendas were perceived professionally in different ways, in different areas of colleges as a threat to individual notions of professionalism, but she was able to align her own approach to CPD to these different views. The influence of funding systems and their link to organisational target achievement is clearly expressed, along with a focus on external policy relating to appraisal and inspection. MA's evaluation of the effect of all these influences on CPD, raised questions about the need for coordination of planning, communication of cultural change and delineation of those factors which can be manipulated to encourage the shared vision policy aspired to.

### ***Leader MB***

#### *Profile*

The profile of this leader involved previous experience as a computer programmer alongside teaching evening classes in languages in FE colleges. Having undertaken teacher training leader MB moved to a full-time teaching post in a school, then shortly after incorporation, went into teaching in further education full time. The FE organisational contexts in which this leader worked, mostly in leading adult education provision, were complicated, since structural responsibilities and partnership arrangements for adult and continuing education changed several times over the incorporated period. This was primarily due to funding changes for adult and community education and a range of sub-contracting arrangements for accredited and non-accredited learning. The effects of this complexity were that, at various times, the provision and staff was inspected as part of the college wide process as well as a local authority sub-contractor. Although early inspection reports judged the provision as less than adequate with low CPD take up, the dedication of tutors and ultimately college wide outstanding quality were noted by the end of the period. Since the school sixth-form and the college of further education amalgamated, this led to a dual leadership role for MA. On the one hand, this involved acting as programme leader for languages in the sixth-form area, where academic students were provided for, but on the other, the role of leading adult education across the college. The latter involved supporting staff who had recently moved from tutoring what had been described as recreational and leisure courses pre-incorporation, to offering approved Schedule 2 vocational, accredited provision funded under the Further and Higher Education Act (1992), as well as supporting non-accredited learning sub-contracted via the local authority.

#### *Key influences on MB*

MB's perceptions of leading professional development were influenced by her range of experience, expressed in different ways in relation to aspects of the variety of her experience. The nature of the adult education provision, compared to mainstream college provision, staff contractual situations and staff identities, affected the options for CPD.

Where the focus was on the specific individual subject, informal CPD was often restricted to sharing resources but was limited where there was no more than a single subject tutor in a distinctive market. In these cases, group CPD was rarely practical as a formal approach. The scope to liaise with competitive providers' staff was limited by the competitive market-orientated policy situation. Most staff were on small part-time sessional contracts and were increasingly employed not directly by the college but via a commercial agency.

For Leader MB the reflective perceptions of incorporation overall were that funding issues were very significant factors in the delivery of CPD for adult and community education. College business imperatives were predominant and acted as performance drivers. However, MB felt that both educational and business values could be managed flexibly alongside each other, to ensure student needs were mostly met, despite some variations in student and staff values and aims.

*After incorporation, it was more and more money and regulation driven, and less and less students at the centre of it, and was driven by student numbers. There could be a clash between what was perceived as education and what could be funded but for me, I didn't really see my focus on adult education as conflicting with the business targets of the college, although there can be a progression problem. When recreational adult education all but disappeared from college view after incorporation, and courses became mostly accredited, there were some complaints about students' expectations of accreditation and why they were doing an adult education class. For instance, they might be more concerned with health or psychological benefits and might never need or want to progress to the next level.*

The funding methodology for adult education in FE emphasised the need for student progression and achievement, but this MB felt, was not considered necessarily to be relevant to all adult education student needs and those of staff.

*Policy was about targets involving 'Bums on seats, the right bums on seats, bums moving to the next seats.' Some of course never moved and did not meet the targets. Adult education is about social, specific skills or task completion or becoming an educated person, not achievement for its own sake. This created some tensions around tutor support in developing student portfolios for accreditation when it was not fair to put students through this if they had other personal targets. Student aspirations that tutors supported might be health, social or wellbeing related. For example, if students were dying, if they are lonely, or their function in life was being eroded; not primarily about training or re-training.*

MB referred to adult provision which fell outside the parameters of progression, accreditation and certified achievement, yet satisfied the other conditions of the policy for



widening participation as encouraged by Kennedy (1997). Whilst such provision was funded by the funding agencies later it was on a reduced scale compared to pre-incorporation (DBIS, 2015).

*Some tutors offering courses for students with a learning disability could be faced with situations where students might never progress but might well need regular repetition, for example a series of calming, waving movements. Eventually these courses were cut as they didn't fit the model of progression, even though tutors developed options for these students. Where does education become leisure?*

This leader compares experiences of college wide training and informal means of CPD via subject specialist groups of part-time staff. Whilst this was seen as effective it did reveal the different status and commitment to different groups of staff and their total impact on business capacity.

*Professional development for the full and substantial part-time staff in college often used management and industry experts from outside, but even here there was an idea coming across of them not respecting teachers or sharing the same values. Government policy was all about getting adults into work, certifying things for employment – education as a vocational pursuit.*

Leader MB highlights the differences in approach to, and opportunities for CPD, between her unit for adult education and that operating for mainstream college staff in the sixth-form, 16-19 academic areas.

*There were significant differences between development of the sixth-form staff and adult education staff. In schools and the college 6th form they were all doing much the same thing for the same purpose. I was not directly responsible for professional development of the sixth form staff. Rather staff development was done to us, rather than my role of designing it. In leading adult education, we did do professional development but part-time staff were not paid to do so and there was no formal programme. Staff did voluntarily come for professional development sessions for language development.*

In some cases, subject disciplinary groupings within adult education differentially affected ways of leading group CPD. Shared subject base networks with other providers, certainly until the more collaborative policies of post 2000, had raised competition issues and had been discouraged, although they sometimes existed as informal communities of practice based on pre-incorporation links.

*Language adult education tutors needed a different approach to professional development. Mostly they were also full-time qualified teachers and did undertake language teaching and learning development as part of the formal professional development commitment. However, full time staff had to undertake teacher*

*training in the form of the externally accredited Further Adult Education Training Certificate and had lesson observations pre-inspection.*

The implications for leading CPD for adult education staff ranged from the issues of employment status, to access to opportunities, but also involved using MB's own professional experience and associated values in finding pragmatic solutions.

*I consider professional development to be anything really. Most formal internal staff development in the college involved preparation for inspection. But adult education involved informal voluntary participation as staff were not paid outside their contracted hours. Staff development for mainstream college staff included sharing ideas in the staff room. For adult education, this didn't and was unlikely to happen; some staff did share resources and learned from each other by talking informally but there were less opportunities for very part-time adult education staff.*

The position was compounded by the different provision and tutors *within* the adult and community area and overall across the college. Professional development approaches had to be differentiated even within the boundaries of the adult education provision, since the needs of staff were affected by the nature of their particular roles as well as MB's own professional experience.

*I took a different response to those staff within the college who were involved in the 'rapid response to business training needs' area. They didn't fit into the other staff groups. They were only in the college environment for a few months, whereas the English as a foreign language tutors and those teaching English as a second language to the community, were ongoing. You cannot expect professional development within the organisation if you have a temporary and different specific job to other staff*

The position of part-time staff employed by commercial agencies was a distinctive issue for MB in adult and community education. It impacted not only on relative commitment to the college, and that of the college to the tutor, but also access to opportunities for development. The position of agency employed part-time staff is of particular significance in leading CPD, because of their contractual position and the implications for their involvement and allegiance to the organisational business, and to their professional colleagues. They were also affected by the limited extent of teams of staff working in and across a common discipline with associated professional interests.

*There were particular issues of CPD with agency staff who were not directly employed by the college. Also, some tutors who previously were contracted by the college had been re-employed via an agency so there was a loss of loyalty to the college. So, my aim was to try to foster some sense of a community of practice*

*between different staff with a focus on sharing resources, being a team and being a good teacher, but by informal professional development means really.*

It is noteworthy that MB specifically cites the issue of the maintenance of professional standards for which she was responsible, without any involvement of the appointment of agency staff. Although ultimately, she could return staff to the agency after a demonstration of inadequate performance, if informal support and guidance was not effective, she had less opportunities for longer term development.

*Really agency staff were not even different teams but were different sorts of people. Aside from 'official' things, I worked with staff appointed via agencies to try to get them up to standard. It was unofficial; well not really unofficial but informal, voluntary, but not part of a programme of professional development. Sometimes it was professional development as a result of complaints.*

There was a different ethos and relationship between the main college subject departmental staff and the adult education staff, in terms of individual and organisational development, and the idea of business capacity building. This reflects the recruitment of the latter and their perceptions of inspection as well as development opportunity uptake.

*Capacity building in adult education was not really an issue for professional development in that staff were recruited either by direct advertising or via an agency, and this was never a problem unless the subject need was really obscure. Most staff were eventually recruited via agencies although some refused to teach for the college when they only achieved a Grade 3 for their teaching observation, (using the set criteria), even though the students were very satisfied. Neither most of the directly employed adult education part-time tutors, nor the agency staff were interested in formal development within the organisation. For adult education tutors, the college could have offered pay to undertake more professional development but there was no budget. I paid myself for lunch for informal team staff development sessions and offered informal support to the team, often in people's houses to encourage a team spirit.*

For Leader MB the influence of inspection regimes and their criteria was considerable and had to be led and managed internally pragmatically with care and consideration of both organisational needs, and the particular needs of different groups of adult education staff.

*Both appraisal and leadership training, following restructuring, were top down, and involved preparation for inspection and was led by external providers in most cases. Inspection raised issues of formal lesson plans and schemes of work which involved time and capacity issues for adult education tutors. For tutors working 2 hours per week I thought they needed the support of their manager in producing schemes of work. The schemes were seen by tutors as irrelevant and not in their*

*professional interests. It was unrealistic to expect them to produce these. It was regarded as a target driven irrelevance to the actual job and the quality of teaching in many subjects did not need them. For instance, to a yoga tutor it was very much about individual student support and development, not a more structured timed lesson plan or a formal scheme of work.*

*My priority was the student need and in leading staff professional development in adult education I was more pragmatic, for example in how to produce inspection files. For inspection, I led on the documentation and produced it for them, rather than taking staff with me.*

All tutors were potentially subject to lesson observation, internally and/or by external inspectors and early appraisal schemes involved grading. The value of grading was contested, particularly when the appraiser was not a subject specialist and interest in colleges as businesses was limited.

*Lesson observations were perceived to be valuable to leaders for both quality and development purposes but at first, they were unannounced and graded. My perception was that grades were irrelevant in that an appraiser didn't know what good teaching in a particular subject was. In adult education teachers were not interested in the business side of the college. They felt that it involved a tick box process approach, not 'are you teaching a good lesson'. They felt that inspection looked at documentary peripheral issues, not at the reality of teaching and learning in a particular discipline. Both inspection and appraisal systems were looking at classes from a different perspective than that of the tutor.*

In terms of staff professional values MB felt there a mismatch between some staff needs and the systems used to evaluate performance.

*Where staff are enthusiastic about teaching, voluntary staff development in adult education is OK because teaching is predominant, not targets as such. But poor teaching can lead to bad exam results. The inspection regime is mechanistic. This might be OK for hairdressing tutors with specific processes but not for English literature. Following a specific plan is not an educationalist approach. For me the question is, are the students understanding and learning?*

Overall, the approach to CPD taken by Leader MB suggests that she was influenced by her own professional background and values, by her style of leadership, and cultures of different individual and groups of subject staff.

*Different professional experiences and their influence depend on your background. Some people come from a business background and have that mindset; I tend to have a more intellectual, challenging mindset which I think comes from my computing and my educational experience. I don't believe in*

*absolutes yet FE management systems based on policy do. For example, the management competency idea of 'managing change positively'. If staff are losing their job it is not positive! Developmental organisational goals might not fit with those of an individual manager. Professional development for tutors in adult education is a rather distant relationship with leaders and managers beyond basic support. Many of the tutors were not even directly involved with the Open College Network type of Schedule 2 curriculum accreditations. They had some input but mostly it was developed by managers. Adult education tutors are not really engaged with the bigger picture, or at least not the same bigger picture.*

Personal and professional values and influences on MB's leadership and management of CPD across the adult education area, involved a pragmatic approach to the diversity of the individual and groups of staff and their needs, alongside a need to work within organisational and policy requirements.

*As a leader and manager, I am systematic, which comes from my programming background, and I am pragmatic regarding organisational aims but I determine them in my own way so that they are our own targets. Development to ensure students are encouraged to reach the potential of what they are capable of, rather than to achieve x% increase was my aim. Whilst targets in FE related to exam results and specific skill outcomes, our team adult education focus was more on students' personal than examination priorities.*

This leader recognised the effect of FE staff diversity in managing and supporting appropriate CPD. In her final reflections she emphasised the need to approach the leadership and management in the adult education area via differentiation between staff values, expectations and realistic needs within their own contexts.

*The diversity of FE is different to schools and universities and diversity within FE means you cannot develop hairdressers in the same way as philosophers. They each have their own vocational culture. You can't ask a philosophy tutor to use a tick box; they would ask you to define a box! Different categories of staff have different cultures. There are ideas that teaching to GCSE level compared to A level teaching is less worthy and less valued; but leaders couldn't follow the same ways for professional development. There is a raft of differences from hours, expectations, pay differentials and roles involved.*

#### *Summary of MB*

Leader MB's pragmatic and highly reflective approach to development of her staff owed much to her range of personal professional experience as the range of staff and their particularly organisational positions within the college, particularly those with part-time contractual status. She reflected upon the very different historical and cultural expectations

of CPD between full-time academic staff, part-time adult and community staff and disciplinary differences in relation to languages staff for example.

### **Leader MC**

#### *Profile*

Leader MC studied English language and literature and had a professional background in skills competency-based training in English as a foreign language, working internationally and in the UK in the private sector. This was followed by lecturing in FE in England in a range of language and communication related curriculum areas from 1996. This leader then became a programme leader for up to 70 part-time staff for cross college basic skills support in a very large, multi-site, multi-cultural, social and economically varied city college. This was a complex institution with a very mixed structural and inspection history which created considerable challenges for all leaders and managers. In MC's own area of leadership, resources and part-time staff were distributed all over the city which raised particular challenges. Despite this, inspection judgements regarding improvements to staff development in functional skills areas were recognised, although 'good' ratings were largely superseded over the incorporated period by 'inadequate' and 'requirements for improvement' post-LSC funding control. This was linked to reports which indicated an associated need for more training of staff cross-college to embed functional skills, alongside the need to incorporate performance management into appraisal systems.

MC's professional experience in FE included supporting a range of students and their staff working with younger people, adults, au pairs and immigrants. The staff teams MC led involved those who were primarily part-time, as well as liaising with other subject related staff who led the course teaching. The basic skills unit staff worked alongside these subject staff in supporting individual students.

#### *Key influences on MC*

For Leader MC, the perception was that CPD was led in the context of corporate business values which privileged targets tied to the funding requirements and the associated systems training. Whilst she was ambivalent about her feelings, she recognised the effect of the very structured system on the ability of the team to operate professionally and autonomously.

*Post-incorporation colleges involved a change of direction to short-term business initiatives and this could be seen as running counter to staff educational values. Occasionally some targets were useful but they demoralised staff, and it didn't encourage them emotionally to commit to the college although the funding focus and target culture was efficient in business terms. There was a confusion between business values and professionalism; between quantified targets and helping people to learn. We were interested in qualitatively developing motivation, progress and confidence but some central staff development always tried to*

*quantify this. You ended up bothering less with things that were not quantifiable and focusing on development for teaching students what to know rather than supporting confidence building. Every term there were changes to funding; what and who could be supported by the basic skills staff and development training focused on these areas. Part-time staff could not easily access the centrally organised human resources systems training, even for recording student data, but they were expected to apply this.*

This leader commented that her own development as a manager was also tied to a narrow skills agenda which affected funding management, and was concerned with managing the business target outcomes of the organisation for her team.

*We were provided with a one-day training course “to become managers”. There were monthly team leader meetings but these were also about funding management. For example, if there was a gap in staff timetables, we had to deal with it by moving staff twice a day across sites to support students. This meant that I had to micromanage tutors, who were on minimum 5-hour contracts but contractually up to 8, with variable demand. Also, to differentiate between full cost-recovery students and those students with concessions. In the ‘olden days’ all students could be offered this sort of support; after incorporation, we were provided with a ‘script’ to explain to students who we could support and who we couldn’t. The lifelong learning policy agenda went out of the window. By 2010 professional development was nothing about the subject needs of the tutors, but the focus was on the needs of government policy and was allied to associated targets.*

CPD opportunities for these particular part-time staff were closely tied to the nature of their contracts and their capacity to participate, but MC was able to lead voluntary staff meetings despite these limitations.

*Some staff in this very large dispersed college never met their colleagues so it was only possible to organise monthly separate staff meetings at different times on one site at a time. This could mean voluntary meeting opportunities at 8-9am before staff started work or at the end of the day. Part-time staff were not paid to participate and it was never practical to run entire team meetings or events until the summer period. But for me the staff meetings were important.*

Take up of electronic communication opportunities was a limited option owing to access to equipment.

*Staff had no administrative time within their contracts so were less likely to engage in email communication. Yet administration of the support was increasingly*

*demanding for these staff. They had no direct access to laptops, yet had to input support funding details, which previously had been kept as notes and on cards.*

Leader MC reflected on the comparison between CPD in schools and colleges such as hers. She felt that the combination of the size and distribution of the college, and the employment status of these staff meant seriously limited scope for CPD time.

*Compared to schools, the difficulty and diversity of support needs in FE impacted on staff PD [professional development] needs. My support for the tutor's role was the most important part of the job but there was a lack of job security for these staff. They went from fixed and short-term contracts and being employed by a college, to being employed via an agency, then back to being employed direct by college.*

In comparison, business-focused organised development was not seen to relate to pedagogic, educational needs by established tutors.

*This was mostly organised and determined by the human resources department, who were not teachers and had no professional credibility. Their focus was regulatory rather than supportive and developmental. Other support depended on the personality of individual leaders. However, human resources did change over time as they tried to change the culture from that of resistance to support of policy. Younger staff without pre-incorporation baggage were more accepting of a 'new' professional ideology and new human resource cultures. But some staff who supported education as a second language around the millennium still adhered closely to traditional educational community service values.*

In the Basic Skills area, the way in which professional development was focused was on organisational target setting and associated performance. This was reflected in the way appraisal and inspection operated.

*The appraisal system began as pedagogically based but became more target focused on the needs of the college. There was no formal individual professional development at all and all leaders could offer as courses, related to target setting or dealing with observed performance deficit aspects so it was very limited. The individual got lost as did negotiation and dialogue. Observations became very formal and graded appraisals were linked to the inspection grade framework. I encouraged dialogue as I believe in it but grading ruins it. Other appraisers didn't enter into dialogue as there was nowhere on the report form to put that bit. We fought against the idea of inspection – students and teaching are what staff were interested in. We complied with the inspection system but we thought it was important to retain our own sense of professionalism and autonomy. Whilst inspections targeted systems, other inspectors considered people. Our own unit*



*was seen as added-value but it was expensive to deliver one-to-one so support was unlikely to survive at the current staffing level.*

There were ambivalent attitudes towards the Institute for Learning (IfL) regulation process. MC's reflections emphasise the tensions between IfL's role as a professional body supporting CPD and its regulatory role.

*The institute for learning came in and went out again. The staff were required to be members, and they made it sound friendly but it was regulatory. So, staff were very confused about what the IfL was and the required e-portfolio was very specific. One tutor I worked with was sampled and asked for further specific evidence and had to go to present that. She did so but others would not have been able to. It was presented as a friendly professional peer support system but it was not.*

Despite these value-based tensions between policy and practice some PD did take place in the basic skills area, alongside the centrally organised systems courses. The more informal events were related more closely to staff curriculum needs and availability of part-time staff.

*Some content for the organised summer events was designed by the team but all of it involved government policy foci. In the early post-incorporation period, there were days on teaching literacy and maths; later it was all about designing smart targets and how to record online and was based on inspection, administrative systems and targets. There was very little specialised PD for example in functional skills for teaching basic education. Administration was not popular but work was system led, even though tutors were not motivated to be admin assistants in place of central admin staff.*

This leader and manager reflected on the restructuring into flatter, delegated management structures which, bound by funding again, involved staff at all levels.

*By the later periods of incorporation every tutor became their own manager and had to account within the budget for their own management of the funds. The senior team allocated budgets to huge departments, then nothing in the management structure, except curriculum managers and then tutors. In basic skills, we operated a distributed management structure with different staffing relationships to those of the main curriculum areas. I managed the timetabling but tutors managed student needs and the records.*

Leader MC observed that in some discipline areas there were different tutoring identities involved in the basic skills area, compared to that for the subject tutors they worked alongside. The tensions involved in this led to informal and sensitive one-to-one mediation and support.

*The tutors sometimes worked alongside the subject teacher who had professional power and responsibility but relationship difficulties with the basic skills staff. As programme leader, I sometimes went to sit in to offer professional development mediation. The issue was that both members of staff were professionally qualified teachers, (not teaching assistants); one was a subject teacher, the other a teacher of basic skills. The social care teachers were very good at working with the basic skills teachers; the IT staff were not. There were insecurities involved of the subject teachers regarding basic skills, so their professional development revolved around confidence building for themselves. We built on the relationships over years, for example between brickwork and basic skills teams, but constant college change and moving around did not help. I did run lots of voluntary professional development sessions for curriculum subject leaders, around how to teach literacy and how to identify literacy issues within the curriculum and encouraged teamwork in developing resources.*

In conclusion, MC's reflections on the effects of incorporation on CPD refer to the issue of diversity of the staff in college as a whole, and suggest that tensions can be creative across the very different identities involved, in terms of professional development of staff.

*The diversity of FE is apparent not only from the numbers of staff who come from outside FE, but it is also very interesting to think about workplace and work-based courses compared to those which are mainly college based. Work-based student support staff can link to the world of work, whereas GCSE/A level are more closely linked to their home world. So, tutors needed development to adapt support to make it relevant to academic or vocational contexts. FE is strange in its diversity and tries to be all things to all people. In FE everybody is leading something now. How I see it, is basic skills alongside curriculum rather than as a separate curriculum. Therefore, PD is an issue of the balance between individual support vis-a-vis the subject curriculum. The development of a community of practice comes into this but not on a subject/disciplinary basis for basic education support. I thought about professional development a lot and the tensions involved in FE, but my own research sees the tensions as potentially producing a dynamic creative framework within the context of a target driven audit policy culture. Whilst professional development worked best if all staff were on one site to build relationships and trust, amalgamations disrupted this.*

#### *Summary of Leader MC*

The leadership role involved MC working across a range of subject areas, staff roles and age ranges of students on different courses, and the part-time distributed staff team created significant challenges for CPD. However, this leader made full use of informal and formal business development opportunities in order to develop her staff, despite a recognition that

the policy environment was not ideal for the purposes of dialogue, which she held personally to be the key aim of support and development. She achieved a reasonable balance between the needs of her own management role and those of her staff, maintaining her personal professional identity and values, whilst mediating the organisational policy requirements.

### ***Leader MD***

#### *Profile*

This leader worked in two large central city colleges with multi-ethnic catchment areas, a wide range of provision and operation from several centres in each case. Both colleges were subject to competition from organisations in their immediate travel-to-work/learning areas, suffered from a range of turbulent circumstances and weak finances at times, and had a very significant proportion of part-time and temporary staff. One college, which eventually merged with the other, was initially successful in both achievement and funding terms. The circumstances of the other college, which struggled to improve its subject inspection ratings, impeded its ability to improve staff development. During the period of 2008 to 2010 MD led the staff of his unit through an Ofsted inspection and then a re-inspection. The merged college, with limited resources, achieved some improvement in staff development via coaching and efforts were made to transform the culture in relation to consistency, evidence and self-assessment. Joining the college in the second decade of incorporation, and bringing private business experience, this leader embraced business values of FE by that point. The professional background of Leader MD revolved around roles within private business companies, new technology, training and consultancy with some involvement with educational institutions. After qualifications in computing, MD had added to his portfolio of work some part-time teaching in colleges of further education, then became a full-time lecturer in large inner-city colleges, followed by leadership roles, initially at course level then section, then departmental/school level, as restructuring created more opportunities for leadership and management. MD completed his own initial teacher training after he was appointed as a head of department, then followed it with an MA in educational management.

#### *Key influences on MD*

Leader MD's abiding motivation in this career was to seek and take advantage of any chances to exercise leadership responsibility, development, and to embrace change and entrepreneurial opportunities arising from the market orientation of post-incorporated FE. He found in the FE sector some tensions arising from a decade of operation as a corporate business, especially from staff who maintained their view of traditional FE educational values.

*In incorporated FE, there were real tensions between management and staff, limited real distributed leadership, and a culture of market competition and threats of amalgamations for reasons of funding efficiency. Yet by 2000s a culture of pre-incorporation values and experience was still evident in some quarters, expressed as 'you have missed all the good times including summer retreats'.*

The challenges of corporate colleges, MD believed, could be managed by creative leadership. His approach was to find entrepreneurial ways of mediating individual PD needs, by the use of extensive peer support to reconcile individual and regulatory needs of funding imperatives. The ways in which MD's leadership developed provided these opportunities, which linked the business orientation of the college to the personal professional career development elements, of this leader's approach to CPD.

*A few months after my full-time FE appointment I had pulled together a curriculum development proposal and became first the course coordinator, then the programme manager so I had leadership responsibility and a more strategic role. Provision grew extensively in e-learning, web development and training and the department grew so big, they needed to restructure then I was formally appointed as one of the programme managers. I led all the new technology, adult computing provision and the development of the huge demand in this area. So, it got to a point where I needed a bigger portfolio rather than just computing, so there was a restructuring and I was appointed as a head of school and so managed every department from the previous Faculty apart from engineering.*

MD's entrepreneurial and transformational style of leadership responded robustly to formal systems such as inspection and appraisal to support organisational business targets. Yet whilst balancing the organisational business curriculum needs against the identities of individual staff, Leader MD took a pragmatic approach to PD by realigning staff as well as encouraging peer negotiated collaborative development within their current school.

*One of the issues I dealt with related to the professional disciplinary identity of the mathematicians who did not see themselves as part of my school, so I negotiated their transfer to another school where they fitted in better.*

MD's self-identity as a leader was closely tied to the responses he received, from some of his team to his leadership.

*The Ofsted inspections put some of us under extreme pressure and the result was that the schools were reduced from six to three. This meant that I had to take on travel and tourism and catering, alongside business administration, finance and computing. Because I had been a good leader, they wanted this stability and hoped that I would guide them through change. They said 'every year you keep saying what's going to happen this year?'*

MD felt that the key to target achievement was to encourage a sense of staff peer supported self-agency, by encouraging ownership of the target monitoring and performance data.

*The period of the first Ofsted inspection was difficult for staff both in terms of the mountain of change, new regimes and the mass of data staff were required to engage with. One of the ways I managed to motivate staff and get them on board was to talk to them to get them to own the data. I put this into the context of wanting to keep 60-80% of students by the end, then encouraged staff to develop curriculum, so that they could drive this via developing objectives that they owned.*

MD's appraisal support system was organised by peer buddies with the intention of enhancing motivation but reducing potential managerial performance monitoring tensions.

*A system of staff appraisal was one of the key things I introduced with the human resources department. Previously there was a fear of union reaction so it had been really a casual chat, with no real performance assessment. My approach helped in the sense that staff who were doing well were given a real positive sense of security, in an organisational context of redundancies. I motivated staff by working with them to identify why some had performed poorly. I brought in a buddy system which the inspectors had mentioned as a strength. Everyone was peer-buddied with a colleague but the buddy was not based on your line manager so reduced potential managerial tensions.*

The link between managing appraisal, inspection and performance in a motivational but pragmatic, creative way was important to this leader but also in terms of encouraging staff to own both the process and the resulting quality data and build it into their practice. MD considered that there was always an alternative creative solution to any business versus educational potential conflict.

*When we got to the re-inspection it went well with better departmental outcomes. Everyone was more confident and wanted to be seen to raise their grade and profile because it was important to them as individuals. Policy target achievement levels could have conflicted with the lecturer's response to particular student need, so that good thorough lecturer performance may not necessarily achieve the policy target, but basically there was always a creative way around it. Learning aims could change. This enabled the staff to do a good job for the student but at the same time to achieve the policy retention and achievement target. Accountancy part-time staff were particularly difficult to recruit so staff qualified to teach business subjects had to teach elements of accounts. They had different professional disciplinary identities but there was a job security issue involved and I encouraged them to learn from the experience.*

Leader MD's personal career in FE and approach to PD involved an adherence to a target-based business model, but one in which leadership involved a linked concern with the implications for the individual development and needs of the staff teams led.

Essentially the notion of leadership itself was the dominant motivation for this leader, but for him it involved a creativity in mediating the means between educational and business priorities. Ultimately the self-identity, vision and strategy of this leader was based on strongly held personal professional views rather than working within an organisational vision. So, the tension here was not necessarily between educational and business but rather between alternative business strategies. Although MB felt that his leadership approaches in FE were influenced by earlier personal professional experiences, his involvement in the FE and teaching context was perceived to be largely accidental.

*Although I now see my background as academic, I worked as a teacher in a school, then part-time as a 'sort of manager' in a private IT company. This was really my initial work experience until I was offered contracts for posts in two colleges to teach computing, at a time when there as shortage of skills in this area so I was in very high demand. I opted for [college Y] because I thought I could do more there than the other college to develop my leadership and at the same time develop a strategy for the provision. From a young age I have always had a sort of 'leadership quality' at school and university, so it was more personal rather than professional for me in terms of my approach to leadership. Essentially, I see my skills and experience shaped the way I lead in relation to policy, but it is based mostly on personal experience. This was the key to my leadership; it was what I stood for. I put students and my staff first, saw the big policy picture but realised it could be changed. I looked beyond the ball at the bigger picture.*

#### *Summary of MD*

The personal professional values that MD holds and defined his approach to staff and professional development were clearly articulated through his reflections of his professional life history in FE. Essentially the approach to leadership and management of this leader was bound up with his personal style and commitment to leading teams of staff. His background and the point at which he entered corporate FE both influenced his view of the sector as a business. Although he expressed a concern with learner and tutor needs his view was heavily influenced by the needs of organisational business contexts.

#### **Leader ME**

##### *Profile*

Leader ME had a commercial quality assurance training background and prior to that worked in other industries. She had experienced both educational pedagogic, and different business, cultures and value systems, during her career. The context of ME's leadership in

FE involved her working initially within a small rural college but mostly leading staff in further and higher-level provision including foundation degrees. Subsequently the college, in which ME continued to be physically based, was amalgamated and merged into the largest college in the sub-region which had a widespread range of sites and provision. Originally each college had different higher education (HE) partners for accrediting their HE provision. ME's team achieved 'confidence' outcomes for their provision from the quality assurance agency (QAA) and the FE college required staff to be members of either IfL or the HEA and to be appropriately qualified pedagogically. The staff were reported by inspectors to have had a strong record of professional subject development including events, research days and workshop support. The benefits and tensions of working between FE and HE systems and cultures, and the implications of this for leading staff in the area of CPD, provided different experiences for ME of leadership.

#### *Key influences on ME*

The historic professional business identity of this leader was based in her commercial background but her encounter with the corporate FE sector, and then working with HE from within FE, layered the leadership experience in quite different cultural contexts.

*I worked in commercial training and development, dealing with private companies which could be on-the-job training. I was also involved with developing bespoke national vocational accredited qualifications and company training plans. It was often about long-term strategies for developing employees, often for large companies. This meant that I was well versed in total quality management systems. In FE I worked in the area of education at degree level within a business school department of the college. I answered for the team to the head of school in FE but also to the director of professional work at the university. In practice, I had more involvement with the latter. In FE it was at first an absolute nightmare; everybody seemed to be doing their own thing. Meetings were a real culture shock; they didn't seem to get anywhere. In my view, the FE College didn't really want to do quality management in the same way as the commercial world. A real culture shock!*

Leader ME initially felt her HE involvement offered her leadership agency for developing CPD although working from within the FE college.

*My work was with courses which involved higher education but in an FE college, so the validating university was an added dimension. The FE head of school empowered me to talk with the university and to organise and discuss collaborative CPD events. I had scope for professional agency, for example in developing narrative research approaches on the course, particularly as one colleague in the team was a known writer. My team was encouraged by HE to*

*develop areas of interest. Although it helped to be pragmatic in FE, we had a lot more agency to pursue particular interests of staff.*

The initial expectation of this leader was that her previous business identity and experience would relate closely to the business culture in FE. However, she found the FE professional community and culture to be of a quite different nature.

*Since my higher education work was within an incorporated FE institution, I thought I would draw on my commercial planning experience but it didn't happen like that. HE had different types of targets and a different culture. HE was much more collegial and I was able to pursue and develop the interests of the team. This enabled colleagues to establish their place in our team.*

Policy and practice in incorporated colleges by 2005 changed the ways of working with CPD and its scope for developing FE staff working alongside HE partners. The influence of policy change impacted on ways of working and business practices particularly after amalgamation.

*During the 2005-2007 period, everything changed; changes in FE policy began to impact and between 2007 and 2010 this began to erode the HE practices regarding CPD that we had built up. We had been encouraged to participate in, and to set up our own conferences which developed our research interests and those of the students. However, in FE CPD became a more measured, audited and logged system. Previously there had been a greater element of self-direction, so that the narrative enquiry CPD had led to a whole module being developed on the use of narrative in education.*

The gap between FE and HE approaches to CPD widened after the Foster Report (2005) as did the associated resource positions.

*With the Foster report the whole game changed, then the licence to teach agenda seemed as though our professional identities were being audited and 'measured' against targets. Originally there were targets to aim for but not specifics, then FE interpreted the CPD requirements in ways which aligned with FE priorities and college plans, although some things were not relevant to HE work. The HE funding via the HE funding council had empowered us but this was diminished and we were corralled into FE.*

The effect of both the skills agenda and restructuring affected not just the curriculum focus and inspection but also CPD opportunities.

*We ceased to be part of the business school in FE and became a school of education where the professional development team churned out qualified teachers and provision which could lead to a good Ofsted grade. There was a*



*damaging shift to skills-based courses, encouraged by Foster. It became really difficult as a leader to do what you and the team wanted to develop and to get funds to do it. Although the shift to a business orientation in corporate education was evident in both FE and HE the process developed more slowly in HE than in FE. The changing student market in FE influenced developments. In an area with many FE colleges but no University there were incentives for local provision. BA degrees changed to foundation degrees in education and training, and in view of the learning assistants' market we moved to courses for those working in early years.*

*Restructuring, amalgamations and inspection regimes all influenced the ways in which leaders were able to lead PD. There were complexities of dual inspection regimes to respond to, as well as aligning to reconciliation with the new larger amalgamated college norms, targets and expectations. The FE colleges in the area and my smaller college, had to take on ways of working of the larger college, and regarded that site as the 'head office'. There was a move from collegial personal professional development to that of the priorities of the amalgamated college. We lost research support, time allowances to study and lost the informal HE support and arrangements we had had prior to amalgamation.*

Inspection and FE teacher licencing altered staff senses of their dominant professional identity. The national inspection frameworks did not sit easily together with the diversity of FE and between HE from an FE base.

*Inspection was by both the QAA for degree work and Ofsted for teacher training. This put considerable pressure on the team until eventually both areas were inspected via Ofsted. The FE teachers' licencing issue led to the school of education becoming part of a human resources department and direct reporting line management was no longer to the head of education, but to drama. There was robust discussion in meetings which were used to silence academic debate and to retreat into systems and structures. In this way, there was a sense of identities being shaped by state policy and Ofsted inspection. But it was as if they hadn't bargained for the size and diversity of the FE sector which did not fit neatly into Ofsted-type boxes. Within the college experts of 'best practice' were designated but it is noteworthy that these staff did not come from the team delivering education courses to both FE and HE students.*

As a leader ME considered that staff crossover and liaison within education disciplinary teams was important, but had to take account of different staff emphases internally and resources available to support development.

*I included staff from both teams to help team cohesion and development. The education team included those with commercial as well as education backgrounds. The education courses they supported were much more formulaic and systematic at city and guilds level, than they were at certificate in education level. Since students crossed over levels the team were prepared to work together in informal development, although they had different professional and pedagogic foci and identities.*

The diverse range of priorities across FE and HE had a direct impact on the availability, organisation and forms of CPD that could be offered.

*An important professional development model, for students and staff, was lost after amalgamation and the change of HE validating partners. We had used a peers-in-training model as a way of organising development for the team, the students and the staff. We organised in-house conferences – a big word for it but these were mini conferences. They went down well with both staff and students as everyone was learning. Students were also encouraged to team with staff to deliver papers in HE, but with Ofsted all these opportunities became diminished in relation to their criteria. We were not supported to continue this even though we had always done conferences. We were advised that FE priorities were paramount as we didn't work for HE. After that the team dispersed, mostly to work in HE.*

#### *Summary of ME*

The influence and the relationship between Leader ME's earlier professional experience in the commercial training and quality world, and that of leading education in FE and HE after incorporation, was not as direct as might be initially expected. The different professional cultures and the respective priorities and targets of each educational sector, affected the type of support and resources made available for CPD and thus the leadership options. The influence of accountability to inspection regimes and their respective FE and HE criteria, affected the scope for some forms of professional development, as did the effect of rational business planning, which became particularly evident following the rationalisation process of amalgamation into a larger more 'efficient' college unit.

#### **A comparison of the relative emphases and influences on middle leadership and management of CPD in their different contexts**

The professional life history findings on which this chapter is based offered insights into the ways in which these middle-level leaders and managers perceived their role and practice of CPD. The evidence was offered through less structured conversational professional

narratives and represents their own reflective but subjective perceptions. The main purpose of this approach was to identify through their constructions, significant influences on CPD leadership in their particular area and context. In this final section of this chapter the commonalities and differences in approach and ways in which value positions, autonomy, identity and accountabilities relate to both business and educational professional orientations, are drawn out from a comparison between the five individuals. Elements of the themes from the literature and policy emphases discussed in chapters 2 and 4 are related.

### *Shared or disparate values and roles?*

There was evidence of some common threads across the narrative accounts of these leaders' experience and the literature. At one level there was significant system and overall policy impact in terms of funding targets. The influence of managing funding was identified by all the middle leaders as a significant driver in supporting and creating PD opportunities. At the same time all leaders emphasised the need to try to respond appropriately to staff development individual needs, especially by informal means alongside formal college-wide course provision. All suggested that they were able to adapt and compromise their approaches in the light of ongoing change and their own priorities. Typologies and models of middle management, such as those suggested by Page (2011) and Briggs (2005) owe much to the early work by Shain and Gleeson (1999) on managerialism and the focus on shared role generic understandings across groups of middle leaders. To some extent these models could be applied to these middle leaders but there was greater differentiation within their contexts. These five leaders revealed the particular pressures of operating within ongoing changing environments, but with differences in approach to their distinctive groups of staff and circumstances.

A key common feature for many of these leaders related to working with part-time staff, in precarious contractual circumstances and in areas of the college where demand, employment status and change pressures combined, to challenge the capacity of leaders to develop their staff. Despite being largely under-valued, these staff continued to work 'underground', and above and beyond (Gleeson, 2005). Jameson and Hillier (2008, p.43), whilst suggesting that part-time staff were significantly affected by policy, argued that they were 'situated at the outer edges of LSC-funded institutions and therefore not as bound in by the relentless targets', as implied in this research by the 'big picture' references. Yet staff administrative involvement in the basic skills area was significant. Whilst the surveys of Frearson (2002) had suggested adult and community leaders had the greatest need for their own development support, especially for those with cross-college roles, the managers considered in this chapter were offered limited support for their own roles, and largely relied on their pre-FE incorporation professional experiences and practices to guide them.

### ***Policy targets or compromise?***

There is some suggestion of policy and structures of corporate FE being in tension with traditional educational values, but other examples of integration of such values for the wider development of staff. This may be seen as compromise, or simply a pragmatic balancing of influences and appropriate practices between centrally organised policy linked PD provision, and that encouraged and supported by more informal individual CPD means. Resourced opportunities for more tailored PD were generally regarded as being more limited, although one leader felt he could integrate the latter well with his creative approach to performance development, and another via HE collaboration. Several leaders reflected on the opportunities for informal communities of practice and of using appraisal and inspection for formal and informal support purposes. However, the combination of approaches presupposed that the prime student objective, (as a result of appropriate outcomes of PD), was one of learner achievement, but felt that it should not necessarily relate to qualifications to meet funding targets. Some leaders who were more concerned with broader notions of educational need and development of staff as individuals, reflected upon how this might be achieved within narrower business approaches designed for measurable outcomes. All leaders recognised the ultimate importance of student outcomes of PD for sustaining staff job security and responding to such policy levers especially in skill development areas (Steer et al., 2007).

### ***Academic, vocational, occupational and functional differences?***

In some cases, there were significant academic and vocational differences of view in approaching PD, which was particularly evident in adult education, cross-college and in HE in FE areas. Disciplinary differences of perception and CPD need, such as those highlighted in the HE context by Blackmore (2007) were evident particularly in the accounts of those leaders with cross-college roles such as MA and MC. In those instances, leaders' backgrounds, staff contractual circumstances and professional development needs were clearly differentiated and taken account of. The differences between academic, subject based, and professional teaching identities, was a particular issue for those with cross-college roles. Most leaders seemed to acknowledge and respond to unit or wide contextual traditions, culture and ways of working. Whilst the middle leaders and managers accounts did show some shared educational values, some related to short-term instrumental approaches, others to longer-term sustainable leadership approaches; the latter being as applicable at middle as at strategic senior management levels (Lambert, 2011).

### ***Pre- and post-incorporation professional influences of experience***

All the middle managers/leaders explicitly suggested or demonstrated in their narratives, by their examples of leadership practice, that their *own* fundamental values were influenced in

some ways by their lived-experiences and professional backgrounds, prior to their current roles in the FE sector. It did not necessarily follow that they felt there was always an explicit relationship between previous leadership and management values, which would transfer to their later leadership and management roles in FE, but there were examples of both alignment and contrast of pre- and post-incorporation values. For example, MD was closely aligned both to previous values and the business climate of the college; ME experienced a mismatch between her type of previous business experience and that encountered in FE, then again in the contrast between FE and HE cultures. Pragmatism was applied in several cases in order to deal with short-term situations, regardless of the leaders' own value position, and mediation was evident in relation to the effect of inspection grading on the development of individual staff.

### ***Business and/or education positioning***

For middle managers, their respective business and educational value positions, whether arising from policy consequences or their own experience, were varied in nature and involved complex intersections. The positions were ultimately influenced by the particular circumstances of the context in which they operated and its historic culture and staffing.

### ***Leaders' Self-Agency***

Despite the policy pressures of complying with the accountabilities and business imperatives for target achievement, and the implications for organisational survival, ongoing job-security and commitment to staff, middle managers did find ways to exercise some self-autonomy in creative ways. There is a sense in which all five middle leaders found ways to work within the structures, for example in relation to dialogue and negotiation in relation to appraisal and inspection, to try to ensure that individual and team CPD professional objectives were taken account of, along with nationally set policy criteria. In other ways leaders separated out business and traditional educational based values and functional expectations, into business or educational learning-related CPD, which co-existed. Jameson and Hillier (2008, p.48) suggest that 'trust, freedom and independence' were important to part-time staff in particular, and leader MB trod a fine line in terms of group autonomous action and agency in relation to curriculum support. The balance between individual, team and college-wide professional development initiatives and funding priorities, inspection frameworks and market driven targets, changed as the pressures of these increased, and some options for CPD leadership followed more formulaic, formal and instrumental lines.

### ***Leading CPD within myriad identities***

Professional identities, which as Sachs (2001) notes, can be built from self-narratives, affected what CPD opportunities were accessed and supported. They can be built from

aspects of status, resource and values, including those relating to moral positions and leadership values, which are not necessarily fixed and may shift (Harrison et al., 2003). The notion of dual identities is conceptualised in different ways from caring (Robson, 1996), to coping (Orr, 2010), or between vocational and academic and trainee to employee status (Bathmaker and Avis, 2005). This enables the leader of CPD to adapt but also organise and support generic options, especially in cross-college contexts. An example of middle management positions, which changed over time in the light of policy induced amalgamation, was the way in which the identities and development of the staff team, became more closely tied to top-down and organisational targets and their associated accountabilities. Inevitably the influence of these structural factors impacted on the range of professional development provided. MD embraced entrepreneurial business ideas with enthusiasm and this determined his business orientated approach to CPD and its outcomes.

Public policy narratives can at least influence, if not construct assumptions around 'official' identities of the leaders within the sector, as Fryer (1997) does in relation to departmentalism, whereas the professional life history narratives involve self-identity constructions in relation to their contexts. Yet there are myriad influencing stakeholders on CPD both within state policy and in colleges, from the staff and employers to the individual learner (Gleeson and Keep, 2004).

### **Insights into CPD leadership by middle leaders and managers in FE**

In conclusion to the accounts of these middle leaders and managers, it is apparent that their preoccupations involved a wider range, and subtleties of prioritisation of influences, than that suggested by modelling based on shared leadership values. There was evidence of a shared commitment ultimately to the PD outcome of the needs of students, but differences as to how this was linked to the development of staff. Yet even this underlying outcome was challenged by one leader who was more concerned with 'appropriate' achievement for students and two others recognised that accreditation was just one of the ultimate objectives.

One of the overall purposes in this chapter was to consider how far business orientated policy assumptions or leaders' personal professional values, or a combination of these, encouraged different approaches towards leading CPD. It has demonstrated that business-like practices for these middle leaders in colleges had a direct influence on leadership practice in a variety of ways, but that there is strong evidence also of the influence of individual leaders' professional values impacting on the way CPD was supported. It was clear that there was some effect on CPD leadership being differentiated by the nature and characteristics of the particular contexts involved and the nature of the staff teams, as well as by personal professional history, values and experiences.

In terms of historical change over time there is a sense of continuity of areas of provision and cyclical development, particularly in the area of adult and continuing education (Bailey and Unwin, 2014). At the same time policy and funding support for adult community education has waxed and waned over the incorporation period, leading to development of formal and informal CPD means by middle managers. Amalgamations, changing cultures, resource prioritisation and staff turnover, have all affected opportunities for CPD as identified in the leaders' narratives.

The next chapter, Chapter 6, moves onto the experience of senior managers of corporate FE CPD, who were also influenced to some extent by their previous experience, including that of their own prior middle leadership and management. However, the perspectives of the senior managers had a closer and different relationship with national policy and a wider organisational perspective of its impact on strategy and influence of both educational and business aims.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **PROFESSIONAL LIFE HISTORY FINDINGS:**

#### **SENIOR LEADERS AND MANAGERS**

##### **Introduction**

Chapter 5 was concerned with the professional life history reflections of those with middle leadership and management roles in further education (FE) and the impact of personal professional and policy influences on approaches to continuous professional development (CPD). In this chapter 6 the focus is on similar consideration of reflections from senior managers with experience in corporate FE, across colleges at a strategic level, and the historic influences of policy on business and educational orientations to post-incorporation FE. The professional life history narratives of FE senior leaders and managers offer insights from a broader but individual perspective, compared to that of the middle managers whose focus was on their department or cross-college service unit role.

As in previous chapters, the terms leader and/or manager are used to represent aspects of the roles which may be ones which involve different dimensions of leadership or management, or a combination. The analysis of the senior managers perceptions is structured in a similar way to those of the middle managers in chapter 5, but there is a greater emphasis on the organisational business and strategic implications of CPD policy. Their orientation to professional development and its relationship to learning, including the effect on student outcomes and is one which had a greater concern with business impact than individual student or staff development. Although senior managers perceived that they had a focus on student and associated staff development, it was within the boundaries of a perception which may not necessarily align to the perception of the individual student. The main emphasis on the senior managers in this study is within the overall post-incorporation period, although all of the interview conversations reported in this study also highlighted influences which arose from previous periods of experience.

In a broadly similar framework to that applied in chapter 5 to middle managers, the senior managers' reflections in this chapter are structured via:

- profiles to indicate the scope and context of their roles within the context of CPD;
- identification from the leaders' personal professional experience of influential CPD key emphases on their leadership from within cross-college and national contexts;
- summaries of each senior manager and their approaches to CPD and
- an overview section on the narratives, which compares and evaluates them in relation to aspects and concepts of the broader literature, in order to assess the



effect of influences on senior managers in their leadership of CPD within their contextual roles.

Within this structure specific themes are identified within the leaders' reflective narratives, which have implications for conceptualisation of identity, agency and accountability, in relation to the intersection between policy and personal professional experience.

### **Perceptions of CPD from senior managers' professional life histories**

The senior managers considered in this chapter had specific responsibility for the overall college CPD strategy across their colleges. They are designated SMPA, SMPB and SMPC and SA and SB. These leaders had significant knowledge of and involvement in national CPD policy and SA and SB were college Principals and Chief Executives. Full details of the senior managers background and contexts are indicated within their profiles in this chapter and in Appendix 5.

#### ***Leader SMPA***

##### *Profile*

The profile of leader SMPA, following work in the private business sector, involved a long professional history in further, adult and higher education as well as senior management in a sixth-form academy, which was FE funded. Early in her career this leader worked in outreach adult education in basic skills. She then led a department in a large general inner-city FE college with high levels of deprivation, a very large transient immigrant population and a significant proportion of vocational provision. This leader also held national training and development posts. The inspection record of the incorporated college ranged from 'satisfactory' to 'good', then some 'outstanding' features were achieved by the second decade of incorporation. Specific mention was made by inspectors of a shared and aspirational culture with a staff reward scheme for outstanding teachers. Staff development was considered effective in meeting pedagogical needs of vocational staff when appointed from industry. The record of the academy was more variable from 'requires improvement' to 'good' ratings in relation to student learning. A focus on the range of professional development opportunities for staff, both internal and external, was reported but with a need to follow up for impact.

##### *Key influences on SMPA*

In FE this leader experienced not only a wide range of leader and management contexts but also amalgamations and restructuring both before and after incorporation. She was influenced by her experience of working in business in a service industry, before undertaking degree level study as a mature student. SMPA also worked for a national training and development agency with some direct influence on and involvement with FE

policy, in consultancy to government and had involvement with a wide range of FE institutions and staff.

Leader SMPA's perspectives on her fundamental values were that they were a combination of both personal and professional experiences, and she carried this through to her work in relation to supporting learners and staff in skill-based development roles.

*I inherited a strong ethos of equity and responding to diversity both from my family and from my early experience of working with students with specific needs. My driving influence was to always start from the diverse needs of learners and staff, and to focus on vocational skills rather than philosophical values. In inner-city colleges there was a tension for staff in teaching incoming newer students, who could be community, not college based, and staff needed to develop different skills from those for teaching traditional FE students linked to a particular discipline.*

This leader reflected on pre- and post-incorporation culture differences and the influence of this on her own leadership and management of colleagues. The reflection on some of her earlier corporate experiences, in a climate of a focus on business values and industrial relations contract issues, focused around the areas of managerialism and de-professionalism compared to traditional ideas of professional autonomy.

*My first exposure to educational managers involved votes of no confidence in senior managers, who felt they had to be tougher, more aggressive and action orientated in the way they behaved, but when I became a manager, I thought it doesn't have to be like this.*

Yet Leader SMPA had previous experience of business practice and recognised system training needs in corporate colleges. This followed widespread practice in the sector using human resources led centralised programmes in colleges.

*There were more management briefings, not curriculum development. In community adult education my own leader had worked herself into the ground with limited resources but a high level of support for staff. This experience informed my later management roles.*

SMPA felt that there was a clear distinction between the pre- and post-incorporation curriculum, professional and peer forms of CPD, and that more collaborative structures and CPD practices were lost after incorporation owing to competition. They were not seen to commonly re-emerge until college amalgamations of the post-2000 period, by which time the political focus on the sector had changed to embrace wider providers and social and economic implications.

*My work within colleges pre-incorporation was supported by a range of networks, formal and informal, across a number of colleges, which developed staff and ensured a real sense of a community of practice. After incorporation we lost this; 'don't talk to others about what we do'.*

The relevance of government employer skills-based policy was apparent in one college this leader worked in, but she was able to work reasonably comfortably in this environment given her background. However, in this respect her views were at variance with some of her colleagues, even though she also held strong broader traditional social educational values, which went beyond that of employability skill development.

*I worked in a college with a highly industrial catchment area, very multi-cultural with a new visionary but tough Principal. There were annual restructurings and market/customer business models were apparent. I was OK with this given my early background but colleagues found this far more difficult.*

So, in this context there were gaps between any shared common values of this community of educational professionals, and how the means to integrate values into practice were seen and could be widened via CPD.

*But professional development for the student's benefit was at everybody's heart though there was a sense of 'here's a bottle; pour it in'. I had an abhorrence of deficit models but basic skills work was not really seen as part of the college community.*

As a senior manager Leader SMPA was aware of the impact of incorporation on staffing policy and practice more generally, but she felt she had the self-agency to approach CPD from a direction which was more compatible with her own fundamental values and commitment to the student outcome, but could still be reconciled with an approach which satisfied the business policy.

*Professional development operated within a very tough post-incorporation environment. If staff were not seen as competent in achieving targets, then they were either paid off or moved within a restructured college. The lever for restructuring was funding. However, my focus for professional development was to start from the staff, who might be doing things for the right reasons but doing it wrong and ended up failing the students.*

In terms of the influence of business models on management in FE, this leader observed that business methods which FE embraced were sometimes interpreted in a not very sophisticated way. In this sense she was alluding to basic business strategy with a direct target driven approach for short term profit, resulting from production efficiency, rather than emergent business models for longer term sustainable development, which operate more effectively in more stable environments than was the case in FE.

*In some ways, incorporation brought old business and funding methods not new ones and applied business approaches to education that business had left behind.*

Her comments on the role of inspection and its accountability relationship showed how closely it was tied to the quality agenda, audit and policy levers, as well as the inspection criteria and the associated performance targets. Leader SMPA reflected then on the

discrepancy between operational activity, and the compliance involved in the presentation of activity for external accountability.

*Inspection involved more elaborate evidencing of performance by data. My business experience made this easy for me. The detailed documentary-based approach to inspection involved putting on the best face for whatever was going on, on the ground.*

Funding and Inspection involved policy levers and drivers and was dominated and based on performance targets, which directly impacted on CPD leadership and management options. She observed that *'training revolved around the funding model involving making the most of the funding methodology and dealing with inspection'*. The accountability of a college for its funding was a major issue for colleges and both workload and the changing nature of the workforce, from full-time to part-time to casualisation via agency contracts, all contributed to a diffused impact on CPD approaches.

*The audit culture was a big feature in incorporation. The change of staff contracts from the old 'silver book' conditions to contracts with 27+ teaching hours per week meant there was no time for staff development, and there were very underdeveloped new staff coming into the sector. Old local education authority types of staff development disappeared.*

The perception of SMPA, from colleges that she was familiar with, was that funding and audit had a considerable impact on colleges, because of the pressure of the policy directed to achieving average level of funding for colleges.

*'Successful' colleges followed the money; others got submerged. Staff leaders were judged on the basis of your success at acquiring and managing resources; you were a data/funding/inspection person rather than a subject leader after incorporation. I made my own job with funding bids, and on that basis, became a senior manager.*

For mainstream staff the move to a significant focus on funding and performance monitoring for staff, and associated CPD training was, in the colleges she worked in, not an immediate consequence of incorporation, mainly because the policy levers only gradually became more sophisticated. Local authority control of funding prior to incorporation was not devoid of some general monitoring of provision, in that it was largely historically based on broad employment market data, but that in turn on historical patterns of provision. However, the greater complexity of the post-incorporation funding methodology exacerbated the pace of change.

*During the early period of incorporation, apart from inspection teachers were left alone, except where the college was penalised for loss of students. Later the methodology penalised colleges for students at other stages of progression and achievement.*

CPD strategies in this leader's experience of FE were often short-term, supported by limited resources, and operated within a turbulent and pressurised workload environment.

*Middle leaders were grossly overworked. As a middle leader I had felt competent but as a senior manager I didn't. There were no resources within the funding system to support professional development. I used external bid funding to support professional development but it was all very short-termist.*

However, the emphasis on subject and curriculum staff development - a focus which had been more common pre-incorporation when HMI and local authorities supported advisory work - still had some place in CPD overall. Its extent and form varied according to the needs and expectations of different groups of staff. SMPA reinforced the perceptions of some middle managers, discussed in chapter 5, who reflected on the very different tracks CPD took in areas of the college with a school inset history, compared to areas such as adult and community education.

*There was much restructuring and merging with sixth-form staff who had different contractual terms and conditions and never fully merged. Adult education worked on a shoestring and didn't have a strategic mentality. With the sixth-form staff all staff development involved subject based and assessment events in relation to the awarding bodies; for basic skills and literacy a structure of networks just kept going but for vocational staff there was little more than skills development.*

The pace of policy change in the sector was considerable, and perhaps more noticeable in the days of early incorporation in view of the major effect of staff conditions of service changes. The effect of this on CPD was to dominate approaches to supporting major change and practice, with side-lining of individual professional development.

*Really professional development was a way of managing change. Previously there had been much less, but post incorporation there was wave on wave of change. For middle leaders themselves training was introduced, but it related to functional management and competence and did not have a curriculum focus. There was less personalisation and more of a business model and marketing focus. Whilst as a senior manager I was supported to undertake an MBA the college was ambivalent about why it was supporting it.*

The perspectives of Leader SMPA were wide, across colleges and their management. In view of her roles which involved working not only alongside policy makers in a consultancy capacity, but also training managers, she observed and heard their perceptions of incorporation. In terms of policy she was able to reflect on not just the diversity of college situations within the sector, but the difference between those senior managers who had a highly political approach to dealing with it and those whose strategy did not change much from pre-1992 days.

*In my regional and national development FE roles I worked with both policy developers and many FE colleges from the mid-incorporation period. The*

*national support agencies tasked with post-incorporation support, themselves went through a period of significant change with some functions involving research, data gathering and support to colleges, but essentially one of my roles was selling management courses including those offered in collaboration with HE business schools.*

Leader SMPA reflected on the perceived business and educational roles of senior managers in FE and included evaluation of how this affected prioritisation and ideas on the scope of professional development, both for herself and their staff.

*Senior managers in FE were no longer seen as traditional principals but were considered chief executives in competition with each other and were cagey about their own professional development.*

The new roles for senior managers, especially principals, brought with them a distinction, between those politicised managers who saw their role as one requiring significant interaction with the external policy environment, and those who maintained a close involvement with their own college. Many of the former became high profile members of the sector, contributing to policy consultations, advisory groups and leadership roles in the sector membership associations such as the Association of Colleges, the 157 Group of colleges, or those concerned with tertiary provision. In turn these ‘names’ and colleges became the focus of empirical research studies as ‘successful, efficient’ colleges in engaging with and achieving policy targets, and in some instances influencing the policy detail (Jameson, 2006; Ainley and Bailey, 1997). Leader SMPA observed that some senior managers’ own motivations after incorporation were partly affected by their inclination to engage fully with the policy culture of the sector after incorporation. This had an effect on senior leaders’ own middle managers and their approaches to implementing policy, and since CPD was not high profile beyond business skills training, in turn it affected motivation for other CPD strategies.

*My involvement with the government cross-public leadership group brought me into contact with FE principal ‘names’. Some of these became distanced from their college after incorporation but were seen by the funding council to engage with the politics, funding, competition and collaboration, all of which became very sensitive issues. One of my roles was to provide advice as to how FE colleges would respond to policy. The context was one of managing complexity and interacting with change rather than just responding to it.*

One of the ways in which funding and strategy affected CPD directly was in the transition from a focus on curriculum and teaching and learning staff development for its own sake, including that for individual staff career development, to an environment in which the quality agenda became more prominent, along with performance and its measurement. Some colleges integrated their development approach into the investors in people initiative, involving a national standard supported by the training and enterprise council. Adams

(1996) saw such initiatives as a bridge between a college development strategy and a quality kitemark recognised as being based on business principles. However, it was a major commitment to meet its criteria and was not universally taken up.

Leader SMPA recognised a change in the roles of those who led CPD.

*Staff development officers in colleges were within a period of transition into quality managers who became involved with appraisal systems and performance management. The priority of some principals was not necessarily leading professional development for their own college although they could be a good manager of operations and grew their organisations.*

This leader summed up incorporation by emphasising the effect of the ongoing pace of change, the staffing profile increasingly changing to that of part-time staff and the policy effect of encouraging reactive, rather than proactive approaches to CPD.

*The increased use of staff employment agencies made staff more expendable and part time agency staff had few rights. Much management in colleges was reactive rather than strategic. Consultancy work increased in the areas of financial management, the production of government reports and in the areas of key and functional skills development, and in particular compliance.*

#### *Summary of Leader SMPA*

This leader demonstrated how her personal professional values and experience intersected with the culture and funding criteria of incorporation. She reflected on the effect of instrumental target driven policy and its accountabilities but found ways to use her agency to manage change. She offered a college and a national perspective on senior management roles which casts light on concepts of accountability and agency, which are discussed in more detail at the end of this chapter, with the experiences of other senior managers' reflections.

#### ***Leader SMPB***

##### *Profile*

Leader SMPB did not enter FE until just after incorporation and had a background in training in the retail sector, then had roles involving support for both IT and inclusive education. This led on to lecturing posts in IT then leadership in FE management. She was promoted to a senior cross-college leadership position, managing professional development in a large amalgamated general further and higher education college, with multiple sites and with local sixth-form competition. The college travel-to-work area covered both urban and semi-rural areas. Her leadership role involved leading and coordinating her own central professional development team and managing the professional development functional area across the amalgamated college, with service functions across curriculum teams. One of

the key issues facing her team of staff developers involved that of sharing across the college different pre-amalgamated organisational visions, cultures and histories. The inspection reports on her college commented on the open consultative culture of the college, the well-qualified full-time staff, but a historic high turnover leading to a dependence on less well-qualified part-time staff. Teaching observations were reported as being well established and closely aligned to appraisals and staff development.

#### *Key Influences on SMPB*

In terms of the perception of this leader of planning professional development in further education, her experience was embedded in the culture of the retail sector. She was clear that this training experience had influenced her underlying strategy in leading cross college professional development in the context of a very business orientated college. Changes over time and areas of responsibility were reflected upon, but the influence of organisational business values and outcomes was a strong thread. Yet her leadership was more closely linked to her earlier skills and competency occupational contexts experienced than that of her schools' sector experience. She reflected upon these historical professional experiences with an emphasis on structured applied CPD outcomes.

*My training background was in retail where the focus was on 'training for a purpose', then I worked in schools. I had found school in-service training to be less personalised or linked to the values and impact of the organisation. It was not what I would call structured or outcome based compared to my retail training. [I was] moving forward as a teacher but professional development just didn't tie up, as I moved into a cross-college professional development leadership role in further education.*

This senior manager had raised concerns about her own support and development as she moved from a lecturing role to that of an organisational manager of others. For FE leaders and their staff teams in her college, identities constructed involved a balance between roles where they needed to maintain their professional identity, particularly in vocational skill terms, and those involving pedagogic roles. Within an FE business corporate context achieving a balance between leading and managing, and sharing and reflecting on team understandings, crossed the previous professional and business role divide. Whilst Leader SMPB in FE still focused primarily on the notion of the skills involved in dealing with changing staff roles, she also felt that the underlying issue was one of the needs for constant reflection. The 'needs of individuals' were seen firmly in the context of meeting organisational business needs; not necessarily in terms of individual values or longer-term external career expectations or of allowing self-agency to pursue individualised professional interests.

*I felt that turning teachers into managers involved different skill sets and that professional development needed to be designed, rather than directed. Both in*



*schools and colleges, development involves reflective practice, but it was not always clear in the past what staff were expected to reflect on. Outcomes? success criteria? or 'what we expected our teachers to be'? Whilst teachers might feel they were personally growing in FE, professional development is seen in terms of taking the organisation forward in relation to its mission and vision, getting a return on investment and developing skills to do the job and linking to college objectives.*

However, this leader did not see a tension necessarily between business organisational needs and those of the individual member of staff. In presenting this organisational view of professional development this leader flagged an underlying emphasis on people compared to process.

*There are [organisational] priority areas and budget restraints but the focus in this college is on developing people rather than process. Some staff have external professional identities too; they need to undertake updating CPD to maintain their professional membership, so help is available to design activity to meet these needs and scholarly leave is available.*

She led professional updating in the context of flexibility of negotiation as to *how* professional development might be undertaken. For example, vocational lecturers who were required by their professional associations to maintain levels of workplace practice to ensure professional updating, were advised of alternative means to this end with differential costs and benefits to the college. Once again SMPB highlights the business needs of the organisation; that is, what she saw as essential to quality and validation issues for the organisations' business needs. There were strategy and priority considerations to take into account since these vocational staff had dual occupational identities and development needs, in relation to their pedagogical work in the college. So, in SMPB's case the perception of a focus on people tended to mean that personal development was encouraged, *if* it could be aligned to the individual professional in their role and within the organisational business strategy.

This organisational business influence was also apparent in this leader's presentation of the professional development structures and strategy used to identify need:

*Profiles of skills and needs are built up and recorded; quality data is evaluated and linked. It is important to help staff to identify who they relate most closely to and how they fit within the organisation. We have more than one site for the college so networking and encouraging communities of practice is difficult but not impossible. We make arrangements for tutors to meet for an afternoon, and have some professional development days each year for all staff in one location. Staff realised that they had never met colleagues teaching the same curriculum in another centre and had different approaches, so annual events for differently located staff were organised.*

Whilst the difficulties of identifying potential causal implications of CPD were noted by Leader SMPB, there was still a perception that short- or longer-term measurable impact targets are specifically involved. What was described as ‘training’ was perceived as part of an overall strategic plan with its associated targets. A systems management approach was used to make a professional judgement about the most important issues to respond to in terms of professional development strategies.

*We have to be responsive and structured when policy changes and ensure there is a clear link between curriculum and professional development needs. There is causal complexity but it is possible to look at key drivers from the raft of reasons and circumstances for change.*

#### *Summary of SMPB*

To leader SMPB there was scope for agency in identifying likely causes and effects of each policy change but she operated primarily within the wider college business resource context. Since staff were the highest cost centre for the college, this further encouraged attention to investment in types of professional development which could be expected to have a direct effect on student growth targets. Leader SMPB was firmly grounded within the business ethos of the college, yet felt that she was able to exercise some agency as to the way in which she led CPD systems and their operation in relation to individual staff across the college. Although it was an uneasy balance at times this related to her understanding of outcome-based approaches. In this sense it allowed her a strategy of applying and prioritising activity according to its alignment with the needs of the college, and thus ultimate business survival in a turbulent amalgamated environment.

#### ***Leader SMPC***

##### *Profile*

The third senior leader, SMPC, had a wide range of educational professional experiences and provided perceptions of both leading professional development within FE colleges, and of leading elements of the development of national policy for the sector. She had been a school teacher, a university lecturer, an FE lecturer, middle manager in FE and a senior manager before working in national FE agencies. The profile of her work as a college leader of professional development was primarily in a large outer city borough college with several sites, situated in an area with pockets of deprivation, a high level of short-term residents and some sixth-form competition. The college inspection record was one of mostly ‘good’ but with some isolated ‘inadequate’ ratings. The latter related to commentary about good support for students but inadequacy of qualification outcomes. The college was deemed to offer a good range of staff development, with well qualified full-time staff, resourced at 4% of payroll, (compared to the sector average of 1%). This leader was closely involved

subsequently in determining the process of CPD recording by the IfL and working with managers and FE sector staff in implementing the national CPD regulations.

#### *Key influences on SMPC*

In all her roles what SMPC emphasised was a concern with a fundamental, and she felt, totally integrated value of professional *learning* at the base of structure, process and delivery of FE professional development. This was derived from her earlier professional experience of educational values and practice. Although she acknowledged the need for accountability to policy targets and professional standards, the overall presentation of her approach to CPD illustrated the multiplicity of accountabilities: to her own professional self; her staff as learners and the needs of her employer organisations.

The professional influences on this leader are derived from experiences across different educational sectors and experiences. Following teacher training, this leader's professional experience began as a teacher in the school primary sector. She later returned to her own professional development by studying for a degree as a mature student, then a research degree at a traditional university. She considered that both primary and HE teaching were largely based on the concept of a self-motivating construction of one's own curriculum. She taught in a university where the 'culture and appetite' for this agentic approach was strong. Then she moved into FE teaching, then to leading professional development in FE where the culture was of a structured, mechanical and instrumental approach. The greater influence arose from previous experience of her own teacher training. *'It had been a holistic approach [...] which enabled me to provide [...] a constructed curriculum. This brainwashed my way of thinking of professional development as a way of learning'*. What she valued in exercising agency in relation to professional judgement was the moral purpose: *'it is not just ticking boxes for quality assurance but for a higher purpose'*.

To this leader the concept of learning was her greatest professional influence as she moved from primary to undergraduate to postgraduate areas, into FE, and finally into a role involving wider influence as a leader of professional development policy and practice for the sector. The purpose of professional development, whether of her own or in leading others was clear.

*It was never seen as an add-on but as part and parcel of what we do all the time. In the 1990s and early 2000s I tried to do this with my own learners and not many others did. Now [FE initial] teacher training follows a set curriculum pattern with no professional autonomy or judgement or freedom apart from getting it right for your audience.*

Following the period teaching in Higher Education, Leader SMPC encountered in the next stage of her career a quite different approach, compared to her experience in HE.

*It was a whole culture change in FE in the 1990s, a real shock to the system; professional development was seen as a rigid way of teaching, involving a two-*

*day conference in the summer but all regimented. There was a narrowing down of professional development which was not how it should be.*

This experience departed from her original strategy of solely putting the learner first, whether student or staff undertaking professional development; she reflected that target driven strategic performance drivers led to a lack of development of a structured career path. She noted the tendency for individual development opportunities to become a matter of 'chance' with a much less clear trajectory and expectation than HE, where research and publication career routes were clearer.

*In FE development it was all happenstance ... like snakes and ladders ... there were opportunities but it was game-playing, with a rationale in FE that the teacher would be one level ahead. There was no coherent development structure in FE and development was highly dependent on the funding targets.*

This leader highlighted the effect of incorporated, formal pressures on performativity, rather than giving recognition and fully integrating the concept of CPD as a gamut of formal and informal opportunities, and to include in a strategy for leading professional development in a more holistic way. Leader SMPC described how in practice staff were described as having 'done a real ragbag of professional development and some was not recognised as that'. *Peer conversations had directly led to a change in practice* but were not seen as a part of development and were neither recorded nor built into the overall strategy.

Where this leaders' self-agency was apparent, lay in her approach, as head of professional development in an FE college, to working within the resources made available and to the priority areas of the college business plan. However, different disciplinary backgrounds evident in this FHE college raised substantial differences to the way in which lecturers perceived and constructed CPD, not only to what professional development comprised but how it was applied. Disciplinary understandings, subject based concepts of professional identity, expectations and staff willingness to undertake reflection, differed. Also, the scope for individual self-directed CPD varied according to disciplinary approaches.

*My individual self-directed approach allowed people to come to me with ideas to be worked into the overall plan. I could only fund postgraduate study if it had something to do with the plan, and involved putting back in something that could be measured in terms of impact for themselves and their learners. But it was about doing something with CPD. This worked brilliantly in the teacher education department. A lot depends on the experience and presuppositions of subject staff; different departments were at different stages in their development of what professional development is. Historians have to pass it on; skills-based competency vocationally-orientated staff had more trouble reflecting, and sometimes couldn't see the need to pass their learning on – a real sticking point. Other departments were in-between.*

This approach recognised the effect of leading those with professional dual or multiple identities within the sector, as well as the existence of associated diverse professional occupational standards and values, in terms of skills competency frameworks and target setting. Throughout, leader SMPC constructed professional development as being ‘*really about professional learning*’; not the term just being used as shorthand and having been devalued and limited to that relating directly to short term pre-specified targets. The diversity of staff experience and expectations in FE, compared to the school sector, along with the corporate business orientation, did not encourage a single overall understanding of what professional development should be.

*As a concept professional development becomes muddled between knowledge; aspiration and outcome’. There was a need to reclaim the wider idea of professional learning. In schools we never really lost that.*

SMPC took this concept of professional learning forward when she moved into a role specifically developing a framework for staff CPD in FE. In her case this involved working in policy development and implementation, across very large numbers of professionals in both statutory and voluntary sector organisations. Whilst this involved national and statutory policy development, her focus was always on the potential and opportunities for professional learning and development in the widest sense. She applied this focus to vocational skill updating, pedagogic development and personal professional development learning.

When this leader moved into nationally funded roles developing FE leaders, she felt that the process enabled organisational teams to share the impact of development, which she described as ‘*incredibly powerful*’ for the individual participants. However, the overall funding position of colleges limited course delivery as it was face to face and took a lot of staff time out of direct teaching. In this context she considered that the depth of its impact and the community and peer learning, could only be enhanced by the associated use of forums. The wider influence of the course directly related to participants’ ability to cascade, via informal communities of practice. Yet the underlying value of applying the result of the individuals’ learning remained the most important consequence for her of professional development. As the national body for delivering this type of FE leadership professional development was overtaken by other national bodies - which over the next decade, changed by policy and funding no less than five times - opportunities for the sector to access national professional development became more diffuse.

The focus of professional development for mainstream staff in FE, during the period of the Institute for Learning (IfL), involved delegated legislative responsibility for sector regulation of CPD of both FE qualified teaching status and of CPD, and nominally regulation of the disciplinary professional function. The IfL at the time of Leader SMPC’s involvement had dual responsibilities and accountabilities to both government and its own members; which she regarded as an uncomfortable mix of roles. The function of the IfL

was to require FE staff to commit to and report on their CPD on an individual annual basis, in order to maintain their membership and licence to practice. Under the legislation college staff were required to become members of the IFL and to declare their CPD. However, this raised challenges and tensions between professional values, intended to be owned by members, and the professional regulatory roles involved.

*There was a difficult position for a regulatory body within a diverse sector, which had no real means of regulating and enforcing the government regulations. We tried to make it individual but the system drivers for enforcement were not there. For example, there was no Ofsted remit to check the submissions, and there were challenges in attempts to follow up individual non-submitters in that IfL dealt with individual professionals, not the employing organisations. Also, although submissions were content sampled, the idea of follow up was in tension with that of individual professional semi-autonomous and self-directed CPD values. It was not considered appropriate for professional development, based on reflection to encourage a professional culture, to use the stick as a regulatory body.*

In terms of scale, across the very divergent membership within the sector, from small community workers and trainers to large general FE college workers, the impact of the IFL community was potentially considerable.

*At its height 200,000 professionals were involved, so centrally coordinated face to face conversations were not feasible. There was some face to face work via regional advisors, trained by IfL, who worked on demand. This created an ethos which worked well but was very difficult for small training providers, who often valued professional development but wanted it to be formally recognised. They were hungry for it as their work was more directed. The trouble with the FE sector is that it is so diverse that it is difficult to have a fixed framework, so self-directed had to be the basis of CPD.*

Although annual CPD recording was a self-directed, but regulated concept of autonomous reflection on the individual professional's activity, the content and detail were developed via the optional use of an individual electronic portfolio. This was designed to fulfil the following criteria.

*The web-folio was flexible in relation to inputs but scaffolded with questions. Reflection is a high order skill for which some individuals needed help. Its use also tested key skills of technology so it was important for teaching and learning.*

The approach provided some sense in which those with dual occupational status in the FE sector could reconcile quite different professional development needs, values and practices (Bathmaker and Avis, 2005; Orr and Simmons, 2010). It also shows that this process was intended ultimately to be seen in terms of the value of impact on student learning.

Leader SMPC's perception of the idea of efficiency outcome-based measurement, prevalent in much of the policy documentation, recognises the limited influence of school sector

impact studies. Yet she sees the concept of measuring impact in the light of a professional more rounded way, akin to her wider concept of professionalism involving a higher purpose than mechanistic target driven quantifiable impacts might suggest.

*Measuring impact doesn't necessarily make for better learning. Where is the integrity of just measuring a factor? It can be difficult to measure but you do need to apply it and there are different ways of measuring impact. Even if a development action does not work, it is still a form of evidence of learning.*

The approach would appear to differentiate and highlight the values of staff learning from the outcome of the development, regardless of its 'successful' measurable impact on the ultimate student learning target in policy efficiency terms.

Leader SMPC's view was that professional development options for leaders in some educational organisations had become more regimented and rigid over the years, and political influences had narrowed down options to notions of return on investment and measurement outcomes. However, she considered that if professional learning was the underpinning concept, then there was still scope for leaders of professional development to translate policy and apply that learning, whilst relating it to some form of measurable outcome, whether short or longer term.

*It is possible to facilitate and record the effect of professional development on learners by looking at what they are doing, so that reflection on the effects can take place. Smaller training providers are likely to require more recognition and accreditation for professional development whilst larger educational organisations may have the resources and potential for a wider range of options.*

#### *Summary of Leader SMPC*

This leader had an unusually wide range of opportunity to develop her approaches to CPD leadership, both within and across colleges. Despite sector pressures and individual circumstances, as well as policy accountabilities, she firmly adhered to her belief in student learning as a consequence of CPD, that can be applied in the professional practice context, within a business orientation to leadership.

The final two participants, Leaders SA and SB, were both principals and chief executives with particular responsibility for, and involvement with, developing their management teams. They also discussed their vision and strategy for development for their colleges with the aim of ensuring organisational survival and development.

## **Leader SA**

### *Profile*

Leader SA was the senior manager for a relatively small urban college which grew to medium size, offering FHE provision. It had a wide potential rural catchment and travel-to-work area surrounding it, but was also in competition for some provision with adjacent colleges. Throughout much of its corporate history inspectors rated the college as 'adequate', 'good' and 'well run' – with occasional 'outstanding' ratings. However, owing to demographics, and competition, which led to financial instability and funding agency referrals, the college was eventually amalgamated with another college. Although middle managers were reported as needing staff development, overall development was reported as being linked to the strategic plan, although appraisal and staff development links were not initially so strong, and part-time staff reported as not being included. Leader SA had a previous career which spanned international work, teaching arts subjects and then pre- and post-incorporation roles working in FE as a lecturer, head of department, vice principal, principal and chief executive in a range of small to large colleges, as well as some national FE training roles. She had a background in adult education and in senior roles specialising in curriculum development.

### *Key influences on SA*

This leader had a clear vision of both the focus and the means intended to develop the middle management team, based on her values which she felt underpinned the process both in business and educational terms. However, she felt her separate business and educational roles also could be integrated in view of their base in student service and needs.

*In terms of leading professional development my roles are as a principal and as a chief executive and I am very clear about the separation and integration of those two roles. As chief executive, I am responsible for running the business and therefore recruiting and developing professional people in personnel, finance, estates and so on and that is one side of my job. The other side is as a principal who is responsible for the academic leadership of the college. In that capacity I look to recruiting and developing people who are responsible for the whole curriculum portfolio and its relevance and quality.*

Leader SA drew heavily on her previous experience in FE but used the concept of skills to include those involving managing curriculum issues, as well as functional management skills for her managers, related to business needs of the organisation. She also felt that the latter were compatible with educational values in terms of an equitable student service offering.

*In my previous jobs as a deputy principal for curriculum and as the head of a community department, I have always sought to make sure that my section heads*



*have the management skills required to manage teams of staff. The prime thrust of my management development and professional development plans has been an association with the curriculum and its delivery. This is intended to ensure that the students have their full entitlement from the first point of contact with the college to the point at which they progress either to further or higher education or into jobs. The important point to me is seeing that within a team of staff however small that all the skills needed to deliver a good deal to the students are there and that it is done cost effectively.*

Leader SA acknowledged her experience in training and development which she drew on in her own college in planning a strategy for CPD. It was based on the quality structures and the role of inspection, in view of the link to both college markets and the funding of the organisation.

*I was an associate lecturer at a national training and development body, initially responsible for inputs into development programmes for managers and curriculum and educational management programmes. I was then responsible for running whole programmes in association with quality improvement and inspection bodies.*

The context in which she then led a college came at a point where it was clear that the viability of that college to sustain itself, was dependent on its ability to develop both business and professional cultures and structures. Her aim was to distribute leadership and management roles via a flatter structure, and find ways of working to offer staff some potential professional opportunities to exercise their own agency to develop their teams. She applied a general concept of professionalism to staff in both business facing roles, such as human resources and estates, as well as to staff leading curriculum and cross college student services.

*It became very clear to me that the college had development needs from managing funding and resources to developing curriculum whilst improving quality. To this end I needed to undertake a management restructuring which replaced the previous more hierarchical structure, and involved delegation of curriculum and student support budgets, as well as those for finance, human resources and estates management.*

The CPD strategy was part of a wider college strategy and was phased to ensure that it was planned from inside the organisation, and was intended to be seen as a process of culture change in ways of working as well as a skills development process.

*Before a management development programme led with an external national body, we did some management development ourselves. The starting point for me was the selection process we used for candidates, using tasks, in-tray exercises and psychometric testing. This was partly to get information about the skills of the people we were appointing, but it was also the start of culture change in saying that the job was more than about skills; It was also about the sort of person and*

*the importance of having a range of skills and personalities within the management team. It was clear that we didn't have all the skills required of the management team and of individual managers, so therefore we recognised the need for a management development programme.*

The main criteria for using external providers for the management CPD was not one of expertise, but of available time for internal staff to lead such an initiative, which involved internal culture change but also integrated functional management skills. Leader SA made a distinction between specific business facing skills, such as those concerned with HR employment related issues, and those related to student and curriculum delivery. However, in a similar way to SMPB's college there was a clear intention to encourage liaison, collaboration and team working across these different roles.

*Although we had the resources internally to organise this in terms of skills, we did not have not the time so we chose to buy it in. My objective for the management development programme was to build a team of managers to work together. It was about changing the culture to be more open, flexible and collaborative. This meant a team which could challenge but work tolerantly with each other. And then of course on top of that, the skills were required for resource management, HR management and so on.*

The benefits of using some external input were seen as both expedient and offering the opportunity for a more objective view of the culture, and to share professional development ideas from across the sector. In addition, there was an intention to allow internal input to achieve relevance to the college circumstances as well as a degree of ownership of the process. The issues of both workloads and competitiveness between colleges after incorporation limited the opportunities to network, as also observed by Leader SMPA, and SA set out to achieve a balance between internal needs and external input.

*I negotiated a programme and what supplementary work was needed to be done alongside and how the content could be adapted to meet the college needs. This was part delivered in-house by externals plus college input to ensure some contextual relevance. Case study material was drawn from the college rather than from the theory so there was customisation to meet our needs.*

This leader held firmly to the view that her own approach to CPD should mirror the values and culture of the college and the way in which managers chose to provide a service to their students and staff. She cited the values she based her leadership on, and suggested that it should recognise cultures, integrity of purpose as well as the concept of effectiveness in delivering outcomes to students.

*I was very clear that the management development programme was to meet the college's needs and the culture that I believe is important for the college. I believe that we are preparing people through education to live in a challenging world, to be lifelong learners, flexible, able to work independently, to work in teams and to*

*problem solve. If we are not creating a culture in the college with the managers which models that, we cannot possibly deliver with any integrity and effectiveness to our students.*

Beyond the business needs of the college, this leader also recognised a need to ensure that individual staff at least were provided with some opportunity and motivation to develop their own professional careers. Unfortunately, this was a situation where the pace of FE change and its workload consequences resulted in pressures incompatible with taking up these individual opportunities.

*The management development programme was very much for the benefit for the college and to address the skills and ethos we needed. But obviously managers have to have something in it for them. What I offered was opportunity and funding to get level 4 and 5 qualifications and modules towards accredited MBAs. In the event a number of managers embarked on qualification routes but found that in new jobs and under a lot of pressure, nobody could actually pursue a qualification through to the finish.*

The way in which the CPD programme was planned, and the leader's participation in it, was intended to reinforce the commitment expected from the team, but also to ensure that the needs of individuals were responded to and supported. The college context was very important in achieving the development of the group as a team and the customisation of the programme allowed for this.

*It was an important feature of the programme that I attended all the modules and other senior staff were involved as well, so that during a programme group work was put into context all the time. So, in some senses we were co-facilitators in terms of always bringing back the theory to the college individual managers. I think that contextualisation was the huge benefit of having a programme set up for the college as opposed to managers attending an external programme. What is missing if it is totally inhouse is the learning that goes on by talking to colleagues from other institutions to bring in a different perspective. But I was at that stage of building a team which focused on the college. The programme met the plan in that I do believe we built a team of managers with a very strong ethos which met my objectives. I think the extent to which we built all the appropriate skills was more limited, based on a whole range of factors about individual people, but at least we have the awareness of where there are strengths and weaknesses and where people can support each other with mentoring and specific skills support.*

This leader evaluated her own learning in leading CPD and reflected that her intent for the programme to have an ongoing effect on the way the college operationalised developments, was more limited than planned. Unlike Leader SB she didn't directly and explicitly build in specific ongoing projects to apply the learning and development to in the future. This along with staff turnover, limited the longer-term impact of the programme. Although she

recognised from the planning stage that part of the process was to begin with recruitment of staff to fill skill gaps, and this programme was designed to respond to existing staff needs, she considered that it was a weakness of the plan that it did not follow through enough in terms of the learning cycle.

*A shortcoming was the assumption that the CPD experience would be applied to the ongoing job. If I was going to do it again, I would ensure that the managers worked in groups on specific college projects which would have provided the reflection and evidence of learning having taken place, and the opportunity to evaluate it. I think that would have made it much more powerful as they would have had the experience, reflection, doing, then the evaluation of the learning.*

Despite the programme operating partly within a hierarchical structure, which contained elements of direction and subtle enforcement, this senior leader felt that there was an eventual self-recognition by her team of their development needs, especially where their experience lay in academic rather than business backgrounds.

*How did I motivate staff development? Basically, I said I expected it. I made it very clear that my expectation was that everyone attended and there was a very high attendance rate. Staff may not initially have realised a need but there was later an awareness and recognition that it was something they felt was needed. A lot of the managers were drawn from academic teaching backgrounds and were quite uncertain of the management demands being made of them.*

Leader SA had a very applied evaluation approach overall to CPD, but encompassing elements of the professional informal, community and social interactional consequences of the programme. It was also seen as just part of a wider CPD strategy involving ongoing appraisal.

*My criteria for evaluating CPD success are very pragmatic. There is clear evidence that the group of managers now work together as a team and the way information is shared in a very open way. Now appraisal of managers uses a 360-degree model, and it is clear that we haven't got a perfect model of people and skills, but there have been substantial improvements in this respect. It is about being prepared to be professional and open.*

In reviewing the college strategy overall Leader SA saw other elements of CPD, from learning sets to mentoring, having potential to be further integrated to provide future opportunities for development.

*The managers anecdotally have suggested that they have grown enormously in terms of clarifying their ideas and evaluating their own work, as well as growing in confidence and developing their profiles. To develop further we built in ongoing weekly management meetings which are partly briefing and partly updating and use external facilitators. Alongside that, individual managers have attended externally run programmes on a need's identification basis. We have progressively*

*formalised our appraisal programme and tied into that a CPD programme which managers are encouraged to access.*

Leader SA concluded that her personal expectations of her own CPD were not dissimilar to those of her team, despite her relatively isolated professional position as principal and chief executive. She equated mentoring support with professional competence rather than any sense of personal therapeutic support and recognised that her team had similar support needs.

*Senior managers have access to external mentors for individual professional problems and issues which might be sensitive and inappropriate to discuss internally. I expected this for myself when appointed as it is about professional competence.*

The final reflections of Leader SA emphasise her perception of the ongoing continuing nature of CPD, and the ways in which her leadership of the process led to specific opportunities to customise opportunities for development, which fitted the particular context and culture of this college. She felt that she had achieved the objective of integrating skill-based business needs with those needs consistent with a change in college culture, but also allowed for individual growth.

*CPD is a continuous process. Although we front loaded a programme the ongoing weekly meetings are about some of the key issues that are current. We have residentials where more fundamental strategic issues are addressed. We have now fallen into a pattern that I think works for us and is enforced through appraisal. Individual development come out of that for managers. What we have done is achieve the culture change and upskilled the group. Therefore, it is now about maintenance rather than radical intervention. We have been through such change after incorporation, that since the 1990s some people forget they have skills, and how far they have grown and developed in confidence, and taken on new responsibility. That is an important part of what I do and a conscious objective.*

#### *Summary of Leader SA*

Although Leader SA had a clear organisational focus in her leadership of CPD, her underlying educational and learning values, based on her own previous experience, included that of the need for individualised and ongoing development. This encompassed the need for effective overall leadership of CPD to pay attention to culture, team development, specific leadership skills, and not only internal influences but also external facilitation to share expertise and application of CPD, both short and long term. This leaders' evaluation of CPD for her management team was based on both the organisational and policy needs of the sector and the college response to these but it also had a clear link to her professional experience.

## ***Leader SB***

### ***Profile***

Senior leader SB is a principal and chief executive of a large and growing college with three campuses. The college has a wide catchment area, limited 16-19 competition and a very wide range of academic and vocational provision including higher education and industrial work with apprenticeships, as well as being involved with a range of wider educational partnerships. The inspection ratings have moved sharply up from some areas of inadequacy, to 'good' and currently 'outstanding' ratings, with noted rigorous lesson observations and highly successful and effective performance management across the college. The culture of a shared vision, positive ethos and high expectations is reported to be supported by a majority of well-qualified and vocationally experienced staff. The CPD arrangements are closely integrated with the lesson observation system and college development projects which are reported to have impacted on learners' success rates. SB worked in industry and commerce, then in education across sectors from primary to tertiary and higher education and as a leader and manager from lecturer to head of department, vice principal then principal and chief executive over the pre-and post-incorporation periods.

### ***Key influences on Leader SB***

SB acknowledged not only a distinction between the educational and industrial contexts in which he had worked, but also the change within FE that he had encountered in both curriculum and business contexts of the organisation. The way in which he expressed this change was very much in business terms of consequential financial efficiency, although he saw the objective of the college in terms of student service quality.

*My professional career began in industry then in national publicly funded bodies.*

*I had a commercial start to my career then moved into education. The focus in FE has all changed in the last 10 years, not only in terms of curriculum but value for money seen from a production, quality and financial perspective.*

This leader was very clear about the effect he felt of his own experience on his view of leadership in general, and its impact on his way of dealing with staff development. He felt that CPD had to be placed within a context of overall college viability, appropriate structures and quality accountability, so that the business was strong enough to survive without amalgamation. However, he recognised the influence of his own professional life experiences.

*My view of leadership is that there is never a unique way but it is always facilitated by one's own unique experience. My role in a previous college before incorporation was to sort out the finances, and raise the quality in a multi campus college with no common ethos. I brought it back into surplus with reasonable quality assessments. Just after incorporation I moved to a college in deficit*

*therefore it needed to merge or be recreated as an institution. I did nothing structurally for 12 months but focused on what was going on and what was not going on.*

Leader SB felt that CPD had to be led in the context of the internal culture, approach to curriculum development, restructuring and the commercial accountability implications of inspection, but he believed the aspects of the situation which meant the most to staff, were external validations of their performance.

*There was no staff ownership of the curriculum and it had probably not changed in years. For the size of the college it was top heavy in senior management, and only one head stayed following a management curriculum restructuring. The staff had never been allowed to develop; the curriculum was the key to a unified approach from scratch. The college lacked commercial integrity and a culture of living according to its means. Within 18-24 months an inadequate inspection rating in franchised construction provision to a private training provider, was developed to a good rating. This set the scene of an external body validating change and meant the most to staff.*

Progress in college development and capacity for growth, Leader SB was convinced had to be on the basis of benefitting the learner, which in turn was expected to link with to the quality agenda and its reputational consequences. The link to CPD lay in this focus on performance, his own experience of this and a range of supporting CPD activities.

*Following a massive growth in apprenticeship, there was a merger with a local sixth-form and student numbers rose dramatically with the 'Learner First' strategy. This strategy was based on only doing what we could afford in relation to funding, curriculum and development opportunities. I rebuilt the college on the basis of 'if it doesn't benefit the learner then don't do it'. To this end there was zero tolerance of under-performance.*

This leader took a clear and direct business approach to overall strategy but did take account of short and longer-term effects and felt he balanced his own sense of leadership agency with external policy pressures. He also recognised a potential tension between competition and collaboration but that there were benefits and weaknesses to both approaches.

*There was massive development, for example in sponsoring an academy trust to build school-college relationships. Whilst I was shocked at the level of development costs, it was never intended to make money directly. Area reviews of FE were about whether we could protect what we had built up; whether we could be more collaborative; to compete but to survive. They help with planning but there were with further cuts in funding. Whilst smaller colleges may be useful, we also need to be our own masters.*

Applying this philosophy Leader SB argued that he followed a strategy through to his approach to CPD, which did involve some sharing of expertise and experience across

business approaches and a mix of traditional means of CPD, and acknowledged staff individual development needs as well as the development needs of the college. The internal project-based focus of much of his professional development strategy was based on a development of his own educational experience and the direction of developing provision in the college.

*This approach to professional development is based on my own PGCE which taught me to focus on project, rather than individual research-based collaboration. It is now really an action research model that is actually happening.*

In terms of impact of professional development this leader felt the organisation was still learning about the most appropriate ways to determine this. He also fully recognised the range of ways in which his own professional experience impacted on his current CPD strategy for his college.

*We measure the impact of professional development by appraisal and have moved from a tick box approach to considering the impact of activity. We haven't mastered it yet. The IfL approach was not taken up and measured by Ofsted so did not take account of this impact. I think my approach to leading professional development is influenced probably by everything really, from industrial experience to that of educational action research. When I worked in the NHS you knew those who had a master's degree; they thought laterally and outside the box. The issue is finding real solutions by activity, not smoke and mirrors.*

Leader SB reflected upon his dual role as a leader and manager, but unlike Leader SA he felt that the roles were more integral to each other and should not be separated. He considered that the Principal's role was one of operational leadership but did not limit it to academic matters.

*I know there is a push out there to separate the two roles of principal and chief executive in corporate FE, but they shouldn't be separated as it is about getting the leadership mix right between the business role and that of the principal dealing with the operational model. If separate, then everything that cements the two would be lost.*

The key leadership focus in Leader SB's educational organisation was not necessarily on that of providing direct professional development to staff, but to do so via a project and learner impact approach, to share practice for the benefit of the business. His approach to CPD was based on an experiential, collaborative, action research model rather than one emphasising individual professional development. The approach did allow individual staff to develop and some to progress, both within the college and to be promoted outside. Ultimately Leader SB's CPD leadership recognised a wide range of influences.

*Although my approach to professional development was differentiated by staff group needs, (and therefore to some extent their subject and discipline focus), it*



*was primarily influenced by impact on the learner experience. It is about a range of influences really coming together: the leader's own understanding of professional development; the commercial model of measurement of impact; providing effective solutions to issues within the organisation but also responding to policy and resource requirements from outside.*

For Leader SB the underlying business objectives were ultimately the key to his approach, whether for CPD or for other organisational reasons. From incorporation onwards, he did not see the change as one involving greater autonomy but of a different form of accountability and control.

*I didn't see incorporation as greater freedom; I saw that nothing would change on that level. But now I do see scope for greater partnership. The government changes the wheel though; we haven't time to do this on the ground. At a conference recently, I never heard the learner mentioned. Yet one of the things that really transformed me as a teacher was the combinations in TVEI [Technical, vocational, education initiative]. Professional development after incorporation was almost an afterthought and even later professional development policy documents do not take account of FE diversity. In this college we differentiate between scholarly activity and other professional development. There was no real change on incorporation except for governors having a greater role re: finance because they are now running a business, but it is a business model with one hand tied behind the back. We create reserves as long as we spend and invest them but cannot carry a deficit, like some European systems. But if this was not the case then we would have to have a principal/chief executive who was able to operate as a CEO does in industry, as the area review refers to. In FE there is incredible diversity of leaders, colleges, and a broad range of provision so it would always have to be a question of tailored leadership*

#### *Summary of Leader SB*

Leader SB put the issue of the quality outcome of the learner experience at the forefront of the college strategy in relation to leading professional development. Although this provided a focus for a balanced approach between individual and business development the former was seen as ultimately subservient to the latter. For SB the key was to use CPD to enhance the quality of how the college offers education and training, as well as to deliver the demand for educational outcomes to students. He is clear that there must always be this learner focus to staff development activities, especially in such a highly competitive educational sector where policy and funding is important for survival.

### **Overview of influences on the approaches to CPD of senior leaders and managers**

Much of the literature from that of Withers (1998) to Lumby and English (2013) and beyond, can be traced from within a framework of a strong focus and illustration of the effect of business approaches during the early period of incorporation, to a more nuanced consideration of senior managers' leadership and management influences. As the policy discourse moved from competition towards more collaboration and partnership, it operated still within an environment of ongoing change, resource restraint, restructuring and amalgamation. A number of the relatively small-scale research studies of individual senior managers extended and reinforced the evidence base for this business trend. Whilst they illustrate approaches to diverse, whole college CPD, they frequently conclude that that further empirical study would allow for deeper exploration of how senior managers see professional development and the way in which it relates to their own professional lived experience.

For the senior managers in this chapter their roles meant that their positioning, in relation to professional staff and policy targets, encouraged them to prioritise the CPD which would be of most benefit to the organisational college wide goals. Although it is asserted by all of the senior managers that their prime value related to that of students, this is perceived in different ways. Some had a closer eye on the outcome effects on business viability as products, others on individual student need and development, which may not necessarily contribute to this.

For senior managers in FE, the reflections illustrate an evolution of value positions and multiple professional identities. These are based on their professional experience, mediated and integrated with policy change, organisational foci and their contemporary accountability contexts. The senior managers' underlying self-identities, range from individual, group, vocational, and academic identities and those created for the sector via representations in national policy documentation. The range of personal professional influences was apparent from their reflections on their professional lives but had varying impact on their approaches to CPD. Some took the form of CPD being about the application of the learning involved, others as being about a moral value position being taken to education and CPD. Some leaders felt that their underlying focus lay in historic commercial or industrial skill experiences; which was a focus dominant in national policy. For others there was a belief that organisational capacity and business viability could be integrated, with community of practice developments, or reconciled, via a creative and flexible approach to business development, funding and curriculum development. The associated issue is the extent and prioritisation leaders laid on the shared purpose of CPD communities of practice and the concept of CPD being part of a learning organisation (Stoll, 2013). She argued that structures for CPD shape the way professional learning communities are developed in relation to community purpose, and this is a theme of all the senior

managers here within their respective professional communities. In most of the senior leaders' experience, structured activity was seen as the main focus, and directly aligned to perceived measurable strategy outcomes. Stoll's model is not only a wider concept but illustrates the ways in which formal and informal elements of CPD can interact, over time. Individual experience can contribute to personal understandings of professionalism and impact on practice as well as having an impact on business and organisational consequences.

Business organisational values in relation to CPD moved towards the foreground of managers' thinking; a view echoed in a range of senior management studies over the period of incorporation (Crowther, 2014; Iszatt-White et al, 2011; Jameson, 2006; Lumby and Tomlinson, 2000; Withers, 1998; 1999; Ainley and Bailey, 1997; Robson, 1996). Although senior leaders in this research referred to the need to provide individual staff development opportunities, this is emphasised more by those with national CPD experience than by senior leaders in their own organisations. For individual senior leaders their sense of agency was more concerned with strategic options and broad overview cultures for their organisation.

For senior managers, as Loots (2004) suggests, there is a sense in which policy diminishes leadership agency. In other ways, policy rhetoric argues for its enhancement after incorporation. However even in industrial business terms corporate agency was felt to be limited, and this perception operated as a restriction on applying longer term development models. Whilst the senior leaders demonstrated scope for agency at a strategic level, all tied this to their personal values based on professional experience. This reinforces Withers (1998) who argued for the influence of individual personality and background experience, but his interviewees suggested a sharper distinction between those who saw themselves as educationalists compared to business people.

As the corporate sector has matured the sharpness of the distinction has become blurred, identities merged and the interrelationship between agency, identity and accountabilities, is seen in the senior managers in this chapter to have had influence across all of these concepts. The foci of these senior leaders and managers in FE was on applying CPD, which did suggest elements of self-agency being involved, but also revealed dominance of wider organisational and policy influences. Wilson and Deaney (2010), in considering the career change of teachers and what it meant to 'become' a teacher, argued that a sense of agency was a key factor in constructing temporal self-accounts and reflecting their own sense of professionalism. In the case of senior managers, the development and influences of multiple identities coalesce across their careers into a complex amalgam of intersecting reflections on their approaches to CPD.

The idea of 'multi-layered' and horizontal professional contexts and influences on FE CPD leadership, also aligns to Møller's interpretation of accountability in the school context (Møller, 2013). Involving a mix of different forms of accountability, to different bodies,

rather than one limited to elements of managerial or professional accountability, this framework for considering accountability can involve a political dimension, a hierarchically based managerial accountability, a professional accountability to the community of staff as peer professionals, and self-accountability to values of a leader. All of these elements are evident in different senior managers' reflections although their relative influence varies. This raises the issues of professional standards and expectations being involved from those imposed by sector policy; those interpreted and applied to organisational objectives; those agreed and generally accepted within the profession as a whole, and those assimilated by the individual and interpreted within their specific context. In all these respects the professional life histories of these senior managers offer some insights into the relative importance and balance between the range of public and personal accountabilities in practice.

Whilst a focus in much of the literature on senior managers lies within that of funding, structural accountability and organisational viability, this has led to Simmons (2008) and others regarding Principals as business managers concerned with organisational survival and development. For those senior managers in this chapter with national CPD involvement, the individual developmental aspect was seen to be as important as longer-term organisational benefits.

***Business and education influences: an achievable balance?***

Ainley and Bailey (1997) challenged the desirability of measurable targets, but this was embraced by others such as Jameson as an aspiration largely compatible with new professionalism, allied to business values (Jameson, 2006). Perceptions of a traditional business orientated approach to skills development and impact began to change historically in relation to practice within the post-incorporation period, as competition gave way to collaborative sharing practices to some extent. However, Coffield (2014) still argues for a clear distinction between business financial orientations and educational and social functions, although he accepts that implementation of professional development learning and reflection can be key factors to achieve both outcomes. Glatter (2014) however recognises that there is an interface between policy structure and the experience, agency and identity of the leader, which in combination offer greater insight into leadership and management practice. Lumby and English (2013) also place leader and manager influences within the field of college and policy historical change, along with individual professional development.

Of the senior leaders and managers researched, but not all middle managers, there was an emphasis on the culture of business strategy, and the impact of CPD on target achievement. Most felt that these values and objectives were not necessarily incompatible with fundamental educational values, and the emphasis on learning, but that the prioritisation of each, suggested individual variation and was directly influenced by their previous

professional experiences. At Principal level the fundamental focus for CPD lay in the development of their management team, linked to the ultimate impact on targets, via college capacity to deliver these in line with the business plan. There was some evidence of different balances, prioritisation and emphasis within CPD approaches, which showed some subsidiary awareness of the need for some CPD for individual career development, and recognised that the benefit of this may not be in their own colleges. All leaders showed some awareness of the need for some individual CPD in terms of career development and capacity of their teams of managers; the issue is one of prioritisation of objectives.

Studies from Alexiadou (2001) to Boon and Fazaeli (2014) argued for a managerial separation between educational and business values. However, the dominance of particular senior managerial values was challenged by Lumby and Tomlinson (2000), and studies based on lived-experience support the differentiation by individuals given the interdependence of factors. Boon and Fazaeli (2014) acknowledged the gap between what they understood to be CPD leadership via the formal policy structures and discourses, and the detail of differentiated and individualised leadership within colleges in relation to staff development. The latter approach to research can go some way to fill this gap by more empirical studies based on leaders lived experience reflections on their particular contexts. Both educational and business notions of professionalism are evident as being relevant to managers and leaders of the business overall, who had direct responsibility for the level of funding and student achievement. However, this is evidence of CPD linked to the organisational consequences of developing curriculum and student experience, rather than necessarily the view from individual students of their needs.

Overall conceptions of CPD as a national practice and the strategic expectations of senior managers at college level, do not always align, except in terms of overall accountabilities. This is perhaps unsurprising given not only differences in personal professional underlying values but also college circumstances. What is clearer is that the balance, prioritisation and challenge, of the intersecting influences and identities on senior managers in leading CPD in corporate FE, represents more than differences of style, individual, organisational or national effects and change. Still after over twenty years of incorporation, circumstances in FE are seen for senior managers in leading CPD, as ‘the most challenging of their career’ which represents the diversity of the sector and the complications of the intersection of influences (Mackay and Wakeling, 2014, p.99).

## **CHAPTER 7**

### **REFLECTIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **Introduction and Focus**

This final chapter is intended to fulfil a range of purposes. These include a reflection on my contribution to research, and a commentary on my overall research conclusions in relation to the research questions and findings. The contribution of documentary and professional life history data; methodological issues and to conceptual considerations are reflected upon. A final section highlights the implications of my research and recommendations arising from it.

#### **Research contributions**

My research aimed to contribute to understanding of the interaction between the analysis of individual continuing professional development (CPD) leadership factors professional life history perceptions of leaders and managers, and those arising from historical documentary policy material. In so doing it set out to develop interpretations of interrelated concepts such as the extent of leadership agency, the boundaries of accountability and the influences of different leadership professional experiential identities and their impact on leadership and managerial approaches to CPD.

The insight this may offer, to both individual leaders and colleges in potential harnessing of experience to inform developmental approaches and to offer advantages of sharing and collaborating over CPD, is considerable. One contribution of this research lies in its combination of historical considerations, from within the development of leaders' own detailed reflective narratives alongside their perception of the alignment to themes which arose from national policy narratives. There were limited opportunities, particularly in the early documentary data, to align these in the first decade after incorporation, given the very low profile of FE CPD in that period. However, there was considerable scope, via the leaders' narratives, to identify what activity and influences existed and what, on reflection, leaders perceived to be their effects and responses to corporate influences.

#### **Overall research conclusions**

Data from the leaders discussed in this thesis suggested that their approaches were strongly dependent on a complex mix of the influence of their own professional background, life experience and life values. This had to be balanced in relation to any tensions between their own value positions and those assumed by policy. In relation to CPD approaches the myriad of influences on leading professional development, in such a diverse corporate sector, has created a multi-dimensional challenge and one which is subject to ongoing change (Cartwright, 2013). The research, via middle and senior managers' narrative reflections, contributes to the conclusion that influences co-exist but can have different functional

consequences for CPD leadership. This conclusion is informed particularly by the insights on leadership which arise from both their own experience, and that revealed within the policy documentation. The senior leaders had a greater tendency to believe that they could fully reconcile overall college educational, professional, and organisational business development needs although the latter demonstrated a significant focus. The middle managers and leaders in their positions found either creative, pragmatic or entrepreneurial means to lead CPD within their teams.

This study was concerned with extending the boundaries of established work on the incorporated further education sector in the area of leadership and management of CPD, by developing an approach to identification of the ways in which narrative considerations of perceptions from leaders, via a professional life history approach, intersected with those of historical policy documentary assumptions. Whilst one means is seen in the context of the other, the study sought to elicit the ways in which the data interacted and were interpreted in influencing leadership, as perceived by the leaders themselves. Firstly, the research explored how the relationship between the influences was informed by the individual leaders' perceptions of their agency, and in relation to the accountabilities of policy assumptions inherent in the documentation. Secondly, it considered how this affected a sense of identity as a leading professional and their senses of self, group and organisational accountability in their leadership roles. Thirdly, it identified the ways in which they considered their leadership of professional development related to the needs of their staff teams as well as complying with organisational business needs.

The study has implications and recommendations for the contribution of individual leaders to their peer leadership community, and for college strategies to enhance staff development as well as organisational capacity in making use of professional experience. This is discussed in the final section of this chapter. Whilst much literature has focused on the concepts of managerialism and professional learning, following the seminal work by Shain and Gleeson (1999) on compliance, later work developed from this in the area of professionalism and educational values. It has been argued by Crowley (2014) and Gleeson (2014) that earlier polarisations of managerialist business against traditional educational values and influences, appear now to be more closely intertwined, and intersect within different permutations of leaders' experience and contexts. The evidence of my research, via investigation of the relationship between the detail and depth of narrative approaches to lived-experiences, alongside identification from the historical policy documentation of influences on colleges, suggests deeper and more complex relationships.

### **The research questions and the findings**

An original underlying research issue was one of the extents to which business and educational influences can co-exist in this complex and diverse sector. The initial proposal for this research was to investigate the development of a business orientation to managing

FE post-incorporation, during a period of structural and cultural change, with reference to biographical professional cultural influences. In the light of a pilot study which revealed further potential for specific consideration of the interaction between the balance of business and educational professional perspectives, the subsequent research focused more closely on the implications for leading continuing professional development for professional staff.

Thus, the overall research questions were refined and became ones of exploring influences on leadership and management of CPD. The final research questions, which were iteratively developed through the research, revolved around the following:

- What did leaders and managers in FE colleges perceive CPD to comprise?
- What is the relationship between these leaders' and managers' individual experiential professional influences and those arising from professional educational and corporate business policy?
- What sense of individual agency and accountability is involved in the leadership and management of CPD in their diverse professional contexts?

In relation to my research questions within the overall focus, the research involved identifying influences, their intersection and their differentiation in the context of CPD leadership.

The findings on CPD scope, in different FE contexts, revealed significant variation in emphasis, particularly for those working with part-time staff. In more general terms, the question of relationships between education and business value influences was informed in detail by the reflections within the professional life history accounts. These showed that whilst business targets and financial pressures were at times dominating influences during periods of such policy and funding turbulence post-incorporation, middle managers used their own professional experience to reconcile different influences. Integration was achieved, at least in part, between their individual professional values and their leadership and management role functions in relation to policy response. The ways in which managers balanced and linked these aspects were largely pragmatic but they felt their decisions allowed them to uphold their fundamental values.

One exception was a middle manager, when she led in a higher education within FE context, and experienced very different cultures and expectations within each sector, which limited her exercise of individual agency in FE after restructuring. Some other middle managers felt that managerialist functional influences may have changed the nature of their roles, but for CPD leadership still allowed some scope for agency and professional discretion in other ways. For example, this was achieved by mediating systems such as appraisal to also provide support and development informally and individually. As reported in chapter 5, one manager (Leader MC) expressed her perception of the role change at the time as feeling



that a one-day training course turned them into managers overnight, representing ideas of measurement and accountability for the achievement of targets. Taubman (2000, p.82) from the staff relations trade union view, suggested that 'everything was changed' in the sector following incorporation, although he was writing following the major contractual disputes in the 1990s. Although the senior managers believed that they integrated their own professional and business identities and values more, it was in parallel with their changing leadership and management roles. There is individual evidence of different degrees of prioritisation in different contexts by all the individuals researched. The wide-ranging but different previous professional experiences encompassed both business and educational orientations and values.

The question of the relative balance between a sense of accountability to national policy, its organisational application and individual leaders' agency to moderate this, was a complex and individual one. This involved adaptation, with the use of self-agency to apply different levels of influence and contribution to a range of business objectives. Incorporation and the practice of new public management created an underlying climate of managerialist cultures, and some particular CPD foci arose, such as funding, business system training and business orientated development existed alongside other forms of CPD, and separately from curriculum-based CPD. Although senior leaders felt all CPD was fundamentally curriculum and learner led, several middle leaders, pragmatically in their planning, separated the formal business training from other less formally organised educational CPD and training. The difference between individual leaders was the degree of prioritisation given to business practices, which not surprisingly were more dominant amongst those senior managers closely involved with organisationally-wide or national policy roles. Yet the maintenance of their own fundamental educational values was emphasised by *all* leaders and managers in this research, albeit for some with an ultimate organisational view, rather than that necessarily based on the individual staff and student perception.

The final factor involves sector, college and individual leader diversity and raises the issue of the potential for encouragement of shared strengths of professional experience, to contribute to both organisational and team shared visions and development, and to that of individuals' development within the sector. The issue of the needs of particular groups of staff was one which revealed itself in terms of part-time staff particularly and their employment position. Even here it was apparent that subject/disciplinary contexts required a targeted CPD approach in view of the context of the history, culture and expectations of the professional environment in which they worked. The diversity of FE colleges, their type, size and nature, course provision and the history and culture of their often very disparate staff profiles, all had their impact on how leaders saw their CPD leadership role for their department or college.

Locating CPD issues at the interface - between national and FE college level policy assumptions, and often long-term individual professional life history experiences - draws upon the way in which these leaders reached their own positions in leading CPD. The research allowed for some comparison of the way in which policy makers assume policy will be enacted and the ways in which it becomes integrated with a much wider range of value and identity positions (Webb, 2014).

### ***Strengths and limitations of the findings***

#### *Documentary sources*

Although the documentary sources of the legislation on incorporation (FHE, 1992) offered little in relation to CPD beyond a contractual employment transfer, the inspectors' FEFC (1999) report noted the limits of CPD activity, as did the Lingfield (2012) report. The evidence base across the sector arising from policy documentation in the first decade of incorporation overall was limited, and suggested a variable emphasis on this area of development. In many ways this reflects the lack of status, haphazard opportunities, undervaluing of staff and lack of coordinated effort in terms of workforce development, that is an ongoing issue for improvement in the sector (Greatbatch and Tate, 2018; Foster, 2005; Fryer, 1997). Yet as the sector itself widened and moved into new structural organisational forms from the turn of the twentieth century, the policy profile of CPD rose. This allowed for a wider scope for investigation of policy, but revealed complex and overlapping understandings within it. These were not only of what the sector and its colleges comprised and planned for CPD, but also how it defied linear or clear definition of its boundaries and purpose. Meanwhile a greater degree of collaboration, rather than corporate competition, was encouraged within larger amalgamated units or via wider sector partnerships, and there was some strategic rationalisation of purpose.

As is clearly evident from the fast-moving changes in the sector, Gleeson and Keep (2004, p.60) note 'policy makers have become used to pulling the levers that are most readily moved and closest to hand', whatever the intended or unintended results. The result of this policy context for CPD and professionalism for the sector has been to conceptualise the incorporation periods firstly as de-regulation, then accountable re-regulation via the FEFC and associated bodies. This was followed in the twenty-first century by centralisation of a wider lifelong learning and skills sector from 2000, although there was again a cycle of de-regulation of CPD (Gleeson, 2014). Within overall sector policy and funding contexts, CPD colleges have moved between voluntary, then compulsory CPD and back again, but within situated leadership contexts for individual leaders and managers, which offered some scope for individual agency via informal means during each stage. CPD standards and the extent to which they have been applied has an equally uneven policy history. Their application has been shown to be variable, within a diffuse and difficult sector context given the changes in staffing mix, employment circumstances, roles, identity and professional expectations

across the sector. In addition, the permutations of ongoing changing staff roles, serial management restructuring and ongoing resource tightening, suggest a greater but necessarily flexible response to the market and employment skill requirements and the associated CPD, than some of the policy documents took fully into account.

#### *Professional life history sources*

Whilst the consideration within the diversity of FE college contexts, each with their own historical cultures and expectations, adds layers of complexity to the analysis, the range of the individual leaders' ideologies, purpose and potential agency, has been acknowledged as an issue alongside the associated policy assumptions and accountabilities (Hammersley-Fletcher and Strain, 2011; Biesta and Tedder, 2007; Lumby, 2000).

The historical dimensions of this study show not only how the individual professional histories develop as policy changes but how the policy focus on professional development rises and falls. Whilst the policy direction moves in some ways from that of a competitive to a more collaborative partnership approach, this is often through amalgamations of colleges into larger units which may offer greater organisational agency but not always extensive individual leader agency.

An underlying aim of the research revolved around an exploration of the ways in which leaders and managers of CPD in FE interpreted, mediated and applied the emphases of sector policy. The challenge was to find ways of dealing with the implications of researching the complexity and diversity of the FE, with its historical and educational disciplinary boundaries, yet not to lose sight of the relative importance of different types of influences on individual leaders.

Whilst historical policy research and that of individual narrative inquiry take different approaches to analysis, with a greater focus on the topical events and representations in the former and experience in the latter, both are concerned with narratives, whether 'grand narratives' or personal/professional individual ones representing official or unofficial stories (McSpadden McNeil and Coppola, 2006; Clandinin and Connelly, 2000). Whilst it is recognised that history is not predictive and contexts will vary across time, structures and influences may be partially cyclical in terms of policy and its effects (English, 2008), so may offer some insights into subsequent leadership alternatives.

#### **Overall methodological reflections**

The overall methodological approach to this data was intended to acknowledge the associations within a leader's own narrative across their professional life history, which has been seen as a significant benefit in narrative data insight terms (Lumby and English 2009; Seidman, 2006; McCormack, 2004; McCulloch, 2004). However, my intent was then to take this forward to relate to the documentary historical data and the associated literature of

the overriding themes and categories; to do so across the historical policy periods and within the assumptions of the changing policy identified from documentation.

In order to achieve depth of insight, within such a complex, intersecting contextual framework as FE, it was necessary to limit the focus to that selected from general further education colleges in England. This was done appreciating that the sector as a whole now encompasses many other providers of adult, community, voluntary provision, and training. This includes a range of academic and vocational provision and some higher education shared between colleges and other organisations. Whilst there are some wider references to this sector provision, as appropriate to shared history and culture, the focus here has been limited to the main leadership roles and contexts of the college leaders and managers considered

Determining boundaries to the concept of CPD itself and the influences upon its leadership was equally challenging given its potential range, between initial teacher training, (which may be in-service or following previous vocational professional training); continuing development for the previously educationally or vocationally qualified, and involve both formal and informal CPD provision. There was also the underlying issue to consider of the extent of CPD alignment with mainstream sector policy foci compared to that with a more limited subject/disciplinary focus. Additionally, some CPD foci related only to a particular unit context and most to the circumstances of a particular college, hence the need for contextual differentiation.

Since the concern was with the potential associations and co-existence between the influences from a small sample of individual leaders' experience and those influences of the broader policy discourse, there was no intent nor likelihood of identifying direct and generalizable causal links. Rather the data was qualitatively evaluated for its relevance to inform the effect on and complexity of individual leaders' contexts, and the extent to which leaders perceived, interpreted and integrated their own professional values in relation to the influences of the contextual policy.

Given the sector diversity, the methodological sample characteristics needed to be fairly wide in scope, (see Appendices 4 and 5 for the individual leaders' and managers' characteristics). The number of participants was intentionally limited, given the extent and variation of individual life histories, but aimed to achieve a typical, rather than a fully representative sample of leadership and management roles within general FE colleges. The research objective was to identify depth of insights into underlying issues of corporate business and traditional educational and pedagogic values and their relationship, from both the leaders' experiential perspective, and that of the political historical documentation. Whilst each approach to the data offers different types of insights, the focus was on the way in which the research offered a window into this relationship between 'official' policy stories and that derived from individuals. Leaders were expected to differ in relation to

history, culture and individual preferences for the most appropriate form of CPD, as well as in their combinations of values. This was due in part to the diverse provision and relative experience of staff and teams. However, it did not necessarily follow that similar characteristics and background of leaders within the sample would influence in the same way over time. Life history reflections were used to minimise structural bias being imposed on the accounts by the interviewer but did involve researcher subsequent selection, based on the research questions, given the scale, scope and detail of the data produced.

The focus on historical documentary policy material was intended to be primarily historically illustrative of the emphasised themes within the key documents, but to go beyond using this as basic background context. Whilst limited by the need to balance broad sector themes, such as dominant funding reflections, there was a particular focus on the individual specific references and implications for CPD. The criteria for selection of the policy documents were broad. These included those arising from the literature; those produced around key legislative policy change periods, and other documents which were flagged by the leaders themselves as having been influential in their approach to CPD. My overall approach was not intended to involve full college case studies. Although these might have offered some further comparative data from members of the leaders' teams, in some cases it would have been difficult to access the historic personnel. Equally, evidence from the documentary report authors directly might have been useful but the research scope was already wide, and the key focus for this study lay in the link between college leaders' perceptions and policy emphases as presented in the documents. However, historic perceptions of leaders' organisational factors were checked against records of college inspection documents for context reliability reasons and some information included in leaders' profiles.

The individual narrative professional life-history approach allowed space and encouragement for leaders to explore their own constructions of their leadership. As a researcher I did at times guide, via my own interpretation and focus within these narratives, but did not wish to structure further the leaders' constructions. My position as a researcher with a professional background in FE had to be sensitively and carefully taken into account in encouraging an individual sense of collaboration and sharing of professional experience as discussed in chapter 3. In hindsight, I considered use in addition of a method of group reflection, which might have uncovered a greater breadth of contested view, but could perhaps have limited the openness and breadth of reflection that the one-to-one less structured approach offered.

The policy documentation was felt to offer reasonably reliable inferences in that it was publicly and repeatedly recorded, despite the limitation of not returning, at the time of its production, to directly discuss this recorded data (Fitzgerald, 2007). Implications for CPD of FE sector policy from historical documentary discourses are both significant and diffused

across the incorporated period particularly from around 1995 onwards. The frequent policy references to quasi-business and market influences are clearly associated with contemporary government ideology which, with variations of social and economic foci, is expressed via corporate legislation and reports throughout the period. This discourse, primarily of a business economic and employer skills-based nature, has been seen in the literature to push the influence of individual professional historical experience to the background. However, compared to practice, policy did not always recognise either the diversity or the college historical, cultural, business or public service purposes, values and orientations. The FE legislation was also based on the assumption that the traditional historical technical college structures were largely and quickly transferable to the new incorporated college arrangements, along with ongoing changes of funders.

### **Conceptual considerations**

Overlying the sector, college and individual concepts affecting leadership and management, the most significant concepts for CPD involved those of identities, agency and accountabilities and each involved particular influencing elements although they are closely related. Identities and the underlying values, were evidenced as being closely tied to leaders' individual professional experience. However, the ways in which influences developed, evolved and were applied in different combinations, and at different periods of the leaders' professional careers, were often linked to the particular unit or college contexts in which they operated and reflected the contemporary policy emphases. Whether involving formal or informal CPD, professional identities were often associated with different communities of practice. Identity dimensions may be seen in FE to encompass different occupational communities and contexts, but could be seen both within leaders' identities and across individual, organisational and community aspirations and development.

As suggested in earlier chapters, no leader of CPD considered themselves to be relatively immune or tried to distance themselves entirely from the organisational and policy context within which they operated. Thus, their previous and current self-identities, alongside collective organisational and policy informed professional identities, were perceived to influence each other. Although leaders' responses can be conceptualised as conformity, compliance or resistance to policy, professional life histories can also suggest a highly individual sense of identity and selective agency, balancing the influences differentially according to their personal professional values and their immediate context (Felstead et al., 2009; Shain and Gleeson, 1999).

Agency, or the autonomy to act, is also linked closely to a leader's sense of self and values which lie behind issues of self-determination. Identities can therefore be affected by influences from both a sense of agency and from structures (Gleeson, 2014; Lumby and English, 2013). For Swaffield and MacBeath (2013), who view agency as a means of self-regulation and taking initiative in leading learning, it is the element of leadership which is

closely linked to the values and morals of the leader. The corollary for CPD in FE is that all these elements have potential to identify and shape opportunities for CPD within the wider context, and create pressures on individual leadership action. Whilst there may be strategic agency between different forms of accountability to which managers were subject, there is potential for strategic CPD approaches for leaders who focus on the means, rather than the end accountable output, as their prime motivation. Some leaders saw this as pragmatic or expedient leadership but it also may fit with their underlying strategic management intent.

The situated nature of college leadership of CPD, especially in a sector with a myriad of staff identities and sub-sectorial contexts, reveals the range of ways in which leaders of CPD can use their self-agency to adapt, interpret and integrate the strategic needs of CPD. This is the case despite the limitations of policy positions on leaders' agency. In this research this has involved the recognition of some potential for leaders to take account of the practices of individual staff alongside those relating to organisational viability and survival. Business needs can partially meet those of the individual in the sense of job security; an issue in a sector with so much change and instability over time.

In terms of the concept of accountability the research demonstrated for FE its multi-layered application through Møller's (2013) framework of political, policy, management, community and self-accountability levels. The influence of quantifiable accountability for business funding pressures was apparent in skill-based CPD in its hierarchical controlling organisational accountability for learner targets and inspection. However, the research also suggested, with its link to leadership agency and broader values within professional identities, that there were layers of more qualitative self and distributed accountabilities to the teams which the leaders led. This demonstrated the application of the concept was both wide-ranging and cross-influential for the leader, their team and their college organisation in FE.

The research demonstrated this cross-conceptual relationship of three concepts in particular, from multiple identities to demonstrations of different forms of agency, and responses to accountability to various parties. In combination these relationships could be consciously and unconsciously displayed within reflections on performance, as suggested by Lumby and English (2013), based on a range of professional experiences and values or 'imposed' by policy assumption.

### **Implications and recommendations**

The implications of a focus on CPD for colleges lies within the high proportion of staffing costs within college resources overall, and the significant focus on funding and resources by the leaders and managers. Whilst immediately after incorporation there was a greater focus on contractual conditions, funding methodologies and accountabilities to funders, all

in the context of considerable structural change overall, the encouragement for and benefits of, collaborative CPD became more apparent in later periods of incorporation.

Particular recommendations for the use to which this contribution to research might be put, are predominantly in the areas of understanding the relationship between personal and professional values and experience, and the way in which these inform but can be adapted, within a policy implementation response in terms of CPD leadership activity. This is not to say that such experience can necessarily be translated directly, even across a similar unit of FE, but that it could offer some reflection for colleges on both recruitment and development strategies particularly for middle and senior leaders. This may affect the planning for a mix of characteristics within a management team which could enhance leadership and sharing of expertise, and inform approaches to strengthening both staffing organisational capacity and succession planning.

### ***Implications***

The key implications of the findings and the recommendations that arise from them, involve gaps in the literature around more extensive sampling of leaders in particular college contexts; scope for collaborative and community sharing of CPD expertise and potential for different balancing of influences on CPD leadership. Clearly with this sample of leaders and managers and the documentation in this research, its contextual range and extent did not offer scope for broad generalisation of practice across the sector. The study makes qualitative judgements, (rather than any quantitative judgements of the relative importance of influences), on the basis of inclusion of emphases within the individual narratives, about perceived influencing factors and by their justifications for CPD activity and leadership intent. The comparison across leaders considered offered some scope for deeper insights into how leaders perceived some general factors to be of particular significance for CPD for their context, such as funding, organisational target-driven activity and the position of part-time staff. Within these factors there was potential for leadership agency in responding to policy within leaders' own terms. For example, middle managers through their approaches to appraisal or senior managers' plans for customisation of team training.

The implication of nuanced different individual leaders' insights is that some leader agency may be traded for college agency in determining the routes to CPD, in the context of resource limitations and longer-term organisational development. However, there is scope for fuller negotiation with all college parties as to CPD means, to increase staff commitment, ownership, trust and morale, and thus make a contribution to a variety of objectives (Jameson, 2010). There is clear evidence from this current study, of leaders' pragmatism in determining their approach to CPD, and their use of individual professional experience to achieve flexibility and compromise, which incorporates individual and organisational professional values, within the external policy imperatives for survival and development of colleges.



### ***Recommendations***

There is clearly research potential for further and more extensive sampling of leaders and managers, focusing on separate college unit contexts, and other providers such as trainers and community providers of comparable provision. In particular consideration of the leadership role in supporting and developing part-time staff, (whose employment is increasing in the sector but who have limited status), has not been extensive in the CPD literature and offers further scope for research. This is particularly so in view of the increased breadth of the sector beyond colleges. Whilst use of part-time staff is not a new phenomenon and one that Elliott and Hall (1994) observed did not normally permit part-time staff to access formal staff development, this situation is shown in this research to have been exacerbated by increased employment casualisation and use of employment agencies, which can also raise quality issues. The effect of a significant level of part-time staff, who contribute to college quality assessments, inspection and reputational comparisons, justifies increased levels of college attention to resource allocation in business terms, as well as a moral educational imperative for professional support for those with less access to CPD.

The encouragement in recent years for closer collaborative partnership arrangements across the lifelong learning and skills sector, has a variety of effects. Whether resulting from amalgamations, or a structural relationship between the local education authority strategic roles and further education corporations, or from partnerships with wider training and community providers, collaboration offers renewed opportunities for sharing development, within the existing underlying corporate business competitive structures.

There are wider implications of the range of particular CPD leadership activity identified, in a given specific context, which lead to recommendations that much could be transferable to different leaders' contexts, both within and across contexts. One of the main issues relate to that of developing cross-college strategies, which are inclusive of all staff in terms of appropriate CPD opportunities, and the recognition of the relevance and commitment of individuals as well as the organisation. This implies some resource support, but is also about developing a positive culture and ethos of sharing expertise internally and externally to a college, encouraging developmental thinking, and opening up creative options for professional development which fit with needs, circumstances and realistic aspirations. Whilst business accountability systems play a part in ongoing resourcing as well as job security, this is also about enhancing longer term college staffing capacity. Such approaches to CPD leadership can lead to benefits for the existing college, or make a wider contribution to the FE sector and for the individual via career progression, as some of the senior leaders indicated in this study.

Hodgson and Spours (2015) and others argue that there are greater opportunities now for sharing CPD leadership experience with other providers primarily because of the wider sector and the larger college units created by amalgamations. This has potential to bring together college business interests, via closer collaborative working, and offer benefit to individuals and the wider community in which the college operates. Internally within a college, sharing across the college and its units can offer motivational potential for interdisciplinary and cross-occupational transfer of strengths and experience, particularly with the pedagogical scope for teaching. This can be the case despite the diverse challenges of different histories, practice and potential internal market competition within colleges. In turn, this collaborative approach implies a richer and appropriate development of a form of professionalism, which straddles the partnership, vocational and teaching and learning aspirations of the type of ‘triple professionalism’ advocated by Hodgson and Spours (2015, p.209).

The relative balance or dominance of professional or business influences is a delicate judgement, ultimately evaluated in terms of examples of individual leaders’ practice. The evidence of most leaders and managers in this study would suggest that business interests were not seen to entirely overshadow educational and individual influences, and that the sector allows for significant scope for mediation between these elements, within the complex mix of influences. Some remaining tensions between influences were indicated but the evidence in this research suggested that some tensions have diminished by this stage of corporate colleges’ development. Some of the literature and documentation on the sector has sought broad generalities from the evidence base, and policy might suggest that FE leaders’ and managers’ CPD actions would be broadly similar in comparable college situations, but there has been a recognition that the teaching and learning evidence base needs further evaluation (Nash et al., 2008). There has been rather less focus on the leaders’ view although Iszatt-White et al. (2011), did focus on some examples of day-to-day leadership detail. The assumption may be that FE leaders hold broadly similar sets of values, even though some research differentiates between vocational and academic, skill-based and subject binaries, as well as between adult and community leadership and that of general FE provision.

Many of the ways in which professional life-history reflections and policy history intersect are demonstrated in this research. This involves a subtle and complex range of influences, pressures and factors, dynamically interacting with each other, in situated contexts and over a time of significant and fundamental change for the sector and its colleges. These interactions were illustrated by an example of the integration of the framework used in this research (Appendices, Presentation, 2017). Whilst a range of studies use policy reports and legislative documentation as contextual background, this research aimed to compare documentary policy assumptions directly with individual reflections to develop potential

for understanding the intersection of different FE CPD influences. The insights offered by both forms of data used in this study highlight the complexity, variability and unit appropriateness of interpretation of professional development, and the variety of ways in which it can be led, managed and shared.

The overarching CPD influencing factors, which include a range of values and identities affecting staff, leadership and management approaches, were responded to by leaders and managers in different ways. Although leaders did not feel completely controlled by it, Steer et al., (2007) recognised that policy involved a range of political levers. Whilst some factors led to direct training action, in other cases the leaders attempted to ‘shield’ their staff from policy by selecting and taking on some consequences of policy, leaving staff to focus on curriculum, teaching and learning directly. In this way the interaction between policy discourses, their interpretation by intermediaries and application at college leader level, involves judgement and reflections to offer detailed insights compared to the wider policy context. As leader MB observed not all professionals are ‘really engaged with the bigger picture, or at least not the same bigger picture’, and thus needed differentiated CPD, according to individual needs, identities and scale of involvement in a college or team unit (MB, chapter 5).

Although the scale of the literature on post-compulsory leadership is acknowledged to have increased, the impact of individual experience is recognised to be important to be researched further. As noted by Crowley (2014) and Lumby (2000), there remains further scope for research. Recent research evidence of contextual FE leadership is still considered to be sparse (Greatbatch and Tate, 2018). In particular there is still scope to further extend the linkage between the influence of educational and business values and CPD in FE. This is the case particularly via leadership narrative lived-experience research means, in the context of particular comparable units across different colleges, to understand more fully how contextual influences interact with other needs and expectations of development. For example, the potential for developing both individual and organisational capacity of part-time staff in colleges remains an important and underdeveloped area of increasing significance. Now that the sector formally encompasses more small-scale organisations, this offers scope for more shared activity via greater understanding and prioritisation for development. More extensive use could be made by colleges of supporting the sharing of leaders’ existing professional experience that they bring to their role, their teams and their professional communities.

The implication of understanding the intersection and complexity of influences from policy and experiential sources, is that this could be used to enhance and support the effectiveness of CPD meeting as many needs as are possible, within the diverse environment in which colleges currently operate. As O’Leary and Rami (2017, p.77) observed:

FE remains an enigma to many politicians and policy-makers, as indeed it does to the majority of the population. This is in part due to the way in which the identities of many FE colleges and providers have morphed and become more heterogeneous over the last three decades as a result of the marketisation of the sector.

Although it has been argued that a diverse FE sector is badly co-ordinated, its strengths lie in its responsiveness and flexibility and in providing a second chance for education (Coffield, 2007). In terms of policy reform, the problem is that the nature of the wide impact of colleges on a range of government areas in some ways reflects FE diversity and its scope but also is its greatest strength. However, college diversity is not wholly a result of marketisation alone (Nash and Jones, 2015) but is a product of its diverse history and function within the educational system. This thesis has demonstrated potential benefits of leaders drawing more on individual diverse professional experience in leading and managing CPD in different contexts for their teams and colleges.

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## APPENDICES

**Appendix 1: Further Education Policy and Documentary Chronology**

[Key documents considered in more detail in Chapter 4 are highlighted in **bold**]

	<b>Publication/Event</b>	<b>Acronym/ Publisher/Author</b>	<b>Government</b>
1992	Further and Higher Education Act: incorporation for general FE and Tertiary colleges	FHE Act	Conservative
1992	Schedule 2 of 1992 Act (approved courses of further education)	Schedule 2	
1992	Further Education Funding Council created	FEFC	
1993	Further Education colleges incorporated – Vesting day		
1995	Further Education Unit and Staff College merge to form Further Education Development Agency, (subsequently Learning and Skills Development Agency)	FEU FEDA LSDA	
<b>1995</b>	<b>Mapping the FE sector report</b>	<b>FEDA</b>	
1996	FE Staff Development Forum	FESDF	
<b>1997</b>	<b>Learning Works Widening Participation in Further Education report</b>	<b>FEFC Kennedy</b>	<b>Labour</b>
<b>1997</b>	<b>Learning for the Twenty-First Century: Report of the National Advisory Group for Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning</b>	<b>NAGCELL Fryer</b>	
<b>1999-2002</b>	<b>Further Education National Training Organisation</b>	<b>FENTO</b>	
<b>1999</b>	<b>Professional Development in further education: national report from the inspectorate, Further Education Funding Council</b>	<b>FEFC Inspectorate</b>	
2000	Learning and Skills Act created Learning and Skills Council	LSC	
2001	Further Education Funding Council closes; Learning and Skills Councils established	FEFC LSC	

2001	Recognition of FE teaching qualifications		
2002-2013	Institute for Learning established	IfL	
2002	Tomorrow's learning leaders: developing leadership and management for post-compulsory learning survey report	Frearson LSDA	
2002	Success for All: Reforming Further Education and Training White Paper	SfA DfES	
2002	Sector Skills Councils and Sector Skills Development Agency established	SSCs SSDA	
2005	Lifelong Learning UK (a sector skills council)	LLUK	
2005	Realising the potential: A review of the future role of further education colleges	Foster DfES	
2006	Further Education: Raising Skills, Improving Life Chances. White Paper	DfES	
2006	Leitch Review of Skills report: Prosperity for all in the global economy - world class skills	Leitch	
2006	Quality Improvement Agency incorporates (part) Learning and Skills Development Agency functions: remainder become Learning and Skills Network	QIA LSDA LSN	
2006	Office for standards in education and Adult Learning Inspectorate merged	Ofsted ALI	
2006	Further Education and Training Act		
2007-2010	Workforce Reform (LLUK, LSIS and DIUS)		
2007-2012	Compulsory CPD registration and recording regulations: regulated by IfL		
2008	Further Education Colleges: Models for Success	DIUS	

2008	Centre for Excellence in Leadership merged with Quality Improvement Agency to form Learning and Skills Improvement Service for training and consultancy	CEL QIA LSIS	
<b>2009</b>	<b>Apprenticeship, Skills, Children and Learning Act</b>	<b>ASCL</b>	
2010	Learning and Skill Council dissolved; Skills Funding Agency and Young People's Learning Agency [Education Funding Agency (2012)] established	LSC SFA/YPLA/EFA	Conservative/Liberal Democrat Coalition
<b>2011</b>	<b>New Challenges, New Chances: Next Steps in Implementing the FE Reform Programme</b>	<b>BIS</b>	
2011	Lifelong Learning UK abolished, transfer (part) to Learning and Skills Information Service	LLUK	
2011	Education Act (included procedures for modifying articles of FE and dissolution of corporations)		
<b>2012</b>	<b>Professionalism in Further Education Report</b>	<b>Lingfield</b>	
2013	Learning and Skills Improvement Service abolished	LSIS	
2013	Education and Training Foundation	ETF	Conservative
2016			Conservative
2017	Skills Funding Agency and Education Funding Agency replaced by Education and Skills Funding Agency	SFA/ETA ESFA	

## Appendix 2: Analysis and coding example

The professional life history reflections were listened to repeatedly then transcribed and coded on paper, as this small illustrative example now shows electronically, in relation to the overall question around business and educational influences on FE. The second stage was to group the data around associated sub-themes with a broader description and to align to categories of leader/manager, (middle/senior, academic/vocational backgrounds/experience/type of college/staff profiles/historical stage of incorporation/main and subsidiary influences). Since one of the key aims was to establish the intersection between different types of influences the ongoing refinement of the coding was undertaken by repeated consideration of both the recordings and the transcripts to try to identify the subtleties of emphasis and relative importance of the influences cited in the reflections. Codes and themes were built up in relation to the order of priority of the narrative of the individual, as highlighted in their presentation, then aligned for analysis according to main themes in the literature.

This extract was analysed initially for: educational v. management focus; main leadership/management historic career influences/experiences; the effect of FE business ethos – strategy, market, vision and how participant perceived policy and implementation.

*‘Although I now see my background as academic. I worked in a school, then part-time as a ‘sort of manager’ in a private IT company. This was really my initial work experience until I was offered contracts for posts in two colleges to teach computing, at a time when there as shortage of skills in this area so I was in very high demand. I opted for [college Y] because I thought I could do more there than the other college to develop my leadership and at the same time develop a strategy for the provision. Those were my motivations to go into teaching. But I never thought before that I would be a teacher. When I was working for the IT company but I was frustrated because I understood I was going to be a team leader and have a management role but it was actually front-line administration and I felt that was way below my level of qualification. From a young age I have always had a sort of ‘leadership quality’ at school and university, so it was more personal rather than professional for me in terms of my approach to leadership. My FE appraiser later reminded me of my first appraisal when I had said ‘I want to be a leader’. He told me that I was the first lecturer to say this. So, I came into FE by accident, I stayed but I then wanted to do research so moved on when a new principal didn’t share my curriculum vision which fitted with my staff, the culture, history or potential markets. So, when I was offered a private consultancy post again, I resigned from FE and worked with two private colleges developing their accreditation. Essentially, I see my skills and experience shaped the way I lead in relation to policy, but it is based mostly on personal experience. This was the key to my leadership; it was what I stood for. I put students and my staff first, saw the big policy picture but realised it could be changed. I looked beyond the ball at the bigger picture’.*



### **Appendix 3: FE and CPD Prompts**

As noted in Chapter 3, these prompts were originally developed from incorporation literature, and under the heading of ‘changing colleges?’ categories of academic and vocational curriculum foci; marketing, resource and business orientations; student guidance and support; estates/premises; staffing/human resource management and quality were created. Within FE manager networks participants were asked to indicate their experience and perceptions of the relative influence and use of the terms, pre- and post-incorporation. The extract below relates to the terms listed in the section on business management. The responses were used to initially inform potential prompts for the professional life history interviews.

The **terms** included:

assets; budgeting; business/strategic plan; cash flow; client satisfaction; competition; control; corporate culture/structures; costing; product development; efficiency; effectiveness; environmental analysis; financial projections; funding/income sources; growth potential; labour market information; market differentiation/positioning/share; mission; needs analysis; operating plan; personnel planning; quality assurance and control; risk sensitivity analysis; services/staff development/conditions/structures; stakeholders; targets; vision.

**Appendix 4 and Appendix 5 : NOTES**

These notes, which relate to both Appendix 4 and Appendix 5, provide further explanation of the sample which is discussed in Chapter 3 Methodology.

1. The period of focus indicated refers to the incorporated FE college period to which the leadership and management experience relates. The length of leadership/management experience within that period is indicated in the final column.
2. Roles and period of interview focus.  
The use of the \* symbol indicates the role of the leader/manager @ time of interview.  
The use of the # symbol indicates the main role emphasis focused on in the interview.
3. The nature and size of college in which the leader/manager had the majority of their professional leadership experience is as indicated in Chapter 3. This was based on the type of college and FEFC college income levels at incorporation and subsequent growth in size as identified by college inspection reports descriptors.
4. The professional and disciplinary background, both in and outside FE is indicated.

**Appendix 4: Middle Leaders and Managers sample**

<b>Leader/ Manager</b>	<b>Main Period of focus</b>	<b>Leadership roles: # = main role focus of interview  *= role @ time of interview</b>	<b>Nature and Size of College</b>	<b>Leader/ Manager Professional background</b>	<b>Age range Gender</b>	<b>Approx. length of of leadership /management experience</b>
MA	Pre-1992 to 2003	Subject/  Department Head  #Cross-college Service Head  *Consultant  HE lecturer	Small rural General FE college	Marketing  English academic background  Key Skills	60s F	10 years
MB	1994 to 2003	#Adult and community education Manager  *HE Manager	Medium to Large General FE college	Languages  Computer Programming	50s F	7 years
MC	1996 to 2005	Private trainer  Section Head  #Cross college head Core Skills  *Student & HE Lecturer	Very large urban general FE college	English  EFL/ESOL  Core Skills  in state and private sectors	50s F	6 years
MD	2001 to 2010	Course Leader  Deputy Head of Department  #*Head of Department	Large General FE college urban	IT Systems; Private sector Consultancy	30s M	3 years
ME	1998 to 2010	Head of FHE  #*Department Head FHE	Small rural general FE college and then large sub- regional General FHE college	Industrial trainer  Quality Systems	40s F	8 years

### Appendix 5: Senior Leaders and Managers sample

Leader/ Manager	Period focus	Leadership Roles # main focus of interview  *@ time of interview	Nature of colleges	Professional Background	Age range & Gender	Approx. Length of Leader experience
SMPA	Early 1990s to 2015	#Head of FE Departments  #Senior national policy roles  *Deputy Principal urban FE funded 6 <sup>th</sup> form school Academy	Large urban general FE colleges/  National FE development  FE Academy	Wide disciplinary, academic and industrial, business background including the private sector	60s F	30 years
SMPB	1994 to 2017	Department Head  #*Cross-college service head	School then general FE college  Amalgamated large urban & rural FE college	Retail trainer  IT and inclusive education  IT systems  Secondary educational sector experience	40s F	10 years
SMPC	Late 1990s to 2015	#*Head of Department and then senior role in national CPD development and policy	HE  FE medium and large urban general FE colleges	Primary education teaching  English HE  Teacher training and development	50s F	22 years
SA	1990s to 2007	Vice Principal  #*Principal and Chief Executive	Large general FHE colleges	Arts, curriculum and international development experience	60s F	20 years
SB	1990s to 2017	Vice Principal  #*Principal and Chief Executive	Medium growing to large General CFE colleges	Industrial and Finance background  Teaching in education (all UK sectors)	60s M	25 years

## **Appendix 6: Research Information and Consent examples**

Dear xxxx

### **Proposed Research**

I am seeking participants for some research being undertaken in the area of leadership and management of professional development in further education colleges over the period of incorporation in order to better understand the influences on activity in this area. This is primarily for the research purpose, within a post-graduate research study, of contributing to data offering insights into the 'professional lived experience' of leaders in this area. The thesis would be deposited with the Open University. It is hoped that reference to short fully anonymised profiles of leaders interviewed may be included in other learning material. Therefore, I am looking for a volunteer who might be prepared to talk to me, in an informal interview conversation about their roles and experience in leading professional development in FE within a period from incorporation of English FE colleges, after 1992. Essentially, I am looking from those who are, or have been, FE leaders in this period, who would be prepared to talk about how their career professional experiences might have influenced the ways in which they approached and led continuing professional development for their team or college.

If you are willing to take part, I would ask you to begin with some details of your professional history, since one of the things I am looking at is how your experience and roles may have influenced your approach to leading staff in corporate FE; what you see as continuing professional development and what strategies you may have towards it, all within the context of a sector which has had dealt with such substantial and ongoing change and policy since incorporation. The 'interview' is intended to be largely unstructured and informal as I really do want to understand your own perceptions and experience of all this rather than any pre-conceived perceptions of a researcher of FE policy. I hope this is enough to go on for the moment but do of course let me know if you have further questions.

I could come to you at a time and place to suit you. I would anticipate it would take not more than an hour and a half of your time unless you have unusually extensive professional experience in FE. At the moment, I could be available, day or evening, on any of the following days: xxxx to xxxx if any of those dates would suit you. (If none of these dates are convenient please let me know and suggest alternatives).

So, if you might be willing to take part in this please do get in touch. In the first instance you could either telephone and/or leave a message), or email me via xxxx. I hope you feel able to participate and if so, please do let me know, along with any questions you may have about the process. With thanks for your consideration of this.

Marion Cartwright

The Open University

Mobile: xxxx Office: xxxx Home: xxxx

**Consent to participate**

If you are willing to be interviewed to talk about this please do let me know and in due course email to me your consent to take part. if you are in agreement with the following:

- That you understand the purpose, focus and aims of the research and the professional life history data intended to be used to offer insights into leadership and management of CPD in FE but that you may withdraw from the study before or after being interviewed;
- That all reasonable efforts will be made to ensure confidentiality and anonymisation of the data and reviewed with you again during and at the end of the interview prior to any publication.
- The original data will be held securely and will not be retained following this process but you are invited to access a copy following interview.

Signed:

Name:

Date:

## ETHICAL APPROVAL

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**ETHICAL APPROVAL**



**From** Dr Louise Westmarland  
Chair, The Open University Human Research Ethics Committee  
Email Louise.westmarland@open.ac.uk  
Extension 52462

**To** Marion Cartwright FELS/WELS/CREET

**Subject** A Historical Thematic Exploration of the Development of a Business Orientation to Managing FE Post Incorporation during a Period of Structural and Cultural Change with Reference to Biographical Professional Cultural Influences.

**Ref** HREC 2016 2404 Cartwright

**AMS (Red)**

**Submitted** 18/10/2016

**Date** 22/12/2016

**Memorandum**

This memorandum is to confirm that the research protocol for the above-named research project, as submitted for ethics review, **has been given a favourable opinion retrospectively** by the Open University Human Research Ethics Committee by **Chair's action** as it is thought to be low risk. Please note that the OU research ethics review procedures are fully compliant with the majority of grant awarding bodies and their Frameworks for Research Ethics.

Please make sure that any question(s) relating to your application and approval are sent to [Research-REC-Review@open.ac.uk](mailto:Research-REC-Review@open.ac.uk) quoting the HREC reference number above. We will endeavour to respond as quickly as possible so that your research is not delayed in any way.

At the conclusion of your project, by the date that you stated in your application, the Committee would like to receive a summary report on the progress of this project, any ethical issues that have arisen and how they have been dealt with.

Kind regards,

Dr Louise Westmarland

Chair OU HREC

The Open University is incorporated by Royal Charter (number RC 000391), an exempt charity in England & Wales and charity registered in Scotland (number SC 038302)

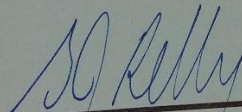
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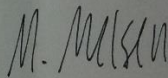
The Open University

**PRESENTATION: STORIES Conference, Oxford (2017)**

# STORIES 2017: DOING EDUCATION DIFFERENTLY

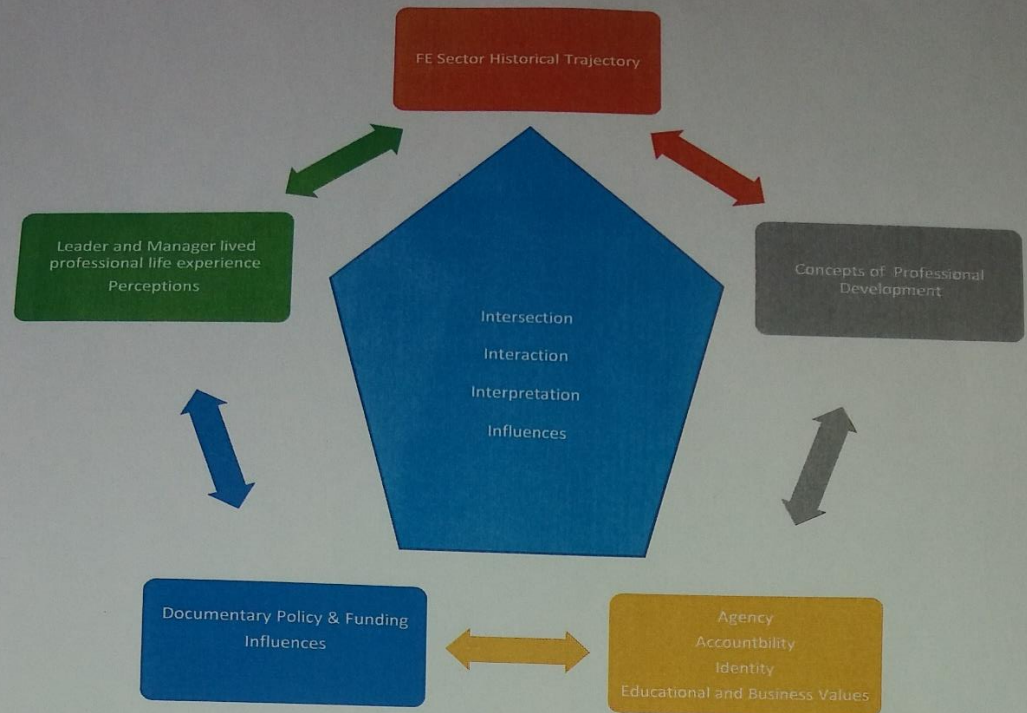
This certifies that  
**Marion Cartwright**  
participated in the annual graduate conference Students' Ongoing Research in Education Studies (STORIES) held on 14-15 March 2017 in the Department of Education, University of Oxford, with a poster presentation entitled Perspectives on FE CPD Leadership and Management.

  
Dr Susan James Relly,  
Director of Doctoral Research

  
Marianne Melsen,  
Organising Committee Member



# HISTORICAL PERCEPTIONS OF INFLUENCES ON THE LEADERSHIP OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN CORPORATE FURTHER EDUCATION



Using a combination of professional life history narrative and historical documentary methods the research aimed to compare and contrast c and individual perceptions post 1993 after the move of Colleges of Further Education from Local authority funding and control to that of Corporate sta

## FE working sub-contexts differences?

'FE policy does not take account of FE diversity'

'Part time professional development has to be informally arranged'

'CPD is different for hairdressers than for philosophy tutors'

## Historically how does professional life history data interact with policy documentation?

'combines own professional experiences with ever changing policy directives'

'mediated/translated by commercial and/or educational experiences'

## What influences how FE PD is led and managed?

'everything really'

'learner outcomes first but must now be value for money'

'was personalised, now rigid and regimented'